

socialist standard

September 2014
Vol. 110 No. 1321
£1.50

Journal of The Socialist Party of Great Britain - Companion Party of the World Socialist Movement

Scottish Referendum

Choose your bosses



China's Wild
West
page 8



Dobson drops
out?
page 9



Aggression
page 14

socialist standard

SEPTEMBER 2014

contents

FEATURES

Scottish Referendum	10
Armed and Dangerous	12
Aggression	14
Competition	15
Piketty and Capitalism	16

REGULARS

Pathfinders	4
Halo Halo!	6
Cooking the Books	7
Material World	8
Greasy Pole	9
Cooking the Books	18
Mixed Media	19
Reviews	20
Proper Gander	21
Meetings	22
50 Years Ago	23
Action Replay	23
Voice from the Back	24
Free Lunch	24

The Socialist Party

52 Clapham High Street,
London SW4 7UN

Tel: 0207 622 3811

Email: spgb@worldsocialism.org

Website: www.worldsocialism.org/spgb

Blog: <http://socialismoryourmoneyback.blogspot.com/>

SUBSCRIPTION ORDERS

should be sent to the address above.

RATES: One year subscription (normal rate) £15. One year subscription (low/unwaged) £10. Europe rate £20 (Air mail). Rest of world £25 (Air mail). Voluntary supporters subscription £20 or more. Cheques payable to 'The Socialist Party of Great Britain'.

The next meeting of the Executive Committee will be on **Saturday 4 October** at the address above. Correspondence should be sent to the General Secretary. All articles, letters and notices should be sent to the Editorial Committee.

Contact Details

SPGB Media: spgb.media@worldsocialism.org

UK BRANCHES & CONTACTS

LONDON

North London branch. Meets 3rd Tues 8pm at Torriano Meeting House, 99 Torriano Ave, NW5 2RX and 4th Tues 8.00pm in September at the Coronet, 338 Holloway Rd, N7 6NJ
Contact: chris.dufton@talktalk.net or 020 7609 0983

South London branch. Meets 1st Tues. 7.00pm. Head Office. 52 Clapham High St, SW4 7UN. Tel: 020 7622 3811

West London branch. Meets 1st & 3rd Tues. 8pm. Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace (corner Sutton Court Rd), W4. Corres: 51 Gayford Road, London W12 9BY. Tel: 020 8740 6677. Email: tenner@abelgratis.com

MIDLANDS

West Midlands Regional branch. Meets last Sunday of the month, the Briar Rose pub, 25 Bennetts Hill, Birmingham B2 5RE.
E-Mail: vincent.otter@globalnet.co.uk.
Tel: 01242 675357

NORTHEAST

Northeast branch. Contact: Steve Colborn, tel: 01915 817 830, email: stvcbrn@yahoo.co.uk

NORTHWEST

Lancaster branch. Meets fortnightly 8.30pm. P. Shannon, 10 Green Street, Lancaster LA1 1DZ. Tel: 01524 382380 Email: spgb.lancaster@worldsocialism.org

Manchester branch. Paul Bennett, 6 Burleigh Mews, Hardy Lane, M21 7LB.
Tel: 0161 860 7189

Bolton. Tel: H. McLaughlin. 01204 844589
Cumbria. Brendan Cummings, 19 Queen St, Millom, Cumbria LA18 4BG

Carlisle. Robert Whitfield. Email: robdotbob@gmail.com Tel: 07906 373975

Rochdale. Tel: R. Chadwick. 01706 522365
Southeast Manchester. Enquiries: Blanche Preston, 68 Fountains Road, M32 9PH

YORKSHIRE

Yorkshire Regional Branch: Richard Rainferd, tel: 01484 327468
richardrainferd@gmail.com

SOUTH/SOUTHEAST/SOUTHWEST

Kent and Sussex Regional branch. Meets second Sunday every month at 2.00pm at The Muggleton Inn, High Street, Maidstone ME14 1HJ.

Email: spgb.ksrb@worldsocialism.org
Tel: 07973 142701.

South West Regional branch. Meets 2nd Saturday of each month in the Railway Tavern, Salisbury, 2.00pm (check before attending). Shane Roberts, 86 High Street, Bristol BS5 6DN. Tel: 0117 9511199

Canterbury. Rob Cox, 4 Stanhope Road, Deal, Kent, CT14 6AB

Luton. Nick White, 59 Heywood Drive, LU2 7LP

Redruth. Harry Sowden, 5 Clarence Villas, Redruth, Cornwall, TR15 1PB.
Tel: 01209 219293

EAST ANGLIA

East Anglian Regional branch. Meets every two months on a Saturday afternoon (see meetings page for details).

Pat Deutz, 11 The Links, Billericay, CM12 0EX. n.deutz@btinternet.com

David Porter, Eastholme, Bush Drive, Eccles-on-Sea, NR12 0SF.
Tel: 01692 582533.

Richard Headicar, 42 Woodcote, Firs Rd, Hethersett, NR9 3JD. Tel: 01603 814343.

Cambridge. Andrew Westley, 10 Marksby Close, Duxford, Cambridge CB2 4RS.
Tel: 07890343044

IRELAND

Cork: Kevin Cronin, 5 Curragh Woods,

Frankfield, Cork. Tel: 021 4896427. Email: mariekev@eircom.net

Newtownabbey: Nigel McCullough.
Tel: 028 90852062.

SCOTLAND

Edinburgh branch. Meets 1st Thur. 7.00-9.00pm. The Quaker Hall, Victoria Terrace (above Victoria Street), Edinburgh.
J. Moir. Tel: 0131 440 0995.

JIMMY@jmoir29.freemove.co.uk Branch website:

<http://geocities.com/edinburghbranch/Glasgowbranch>. Meets 3rd Wednesday of each month at 8pm in Community Central Halls, 304 Maryhill Road, Glasgow. Peter Hendrie, 75 Lairhills Road, East Kilbride, Glasgow G75 0LH. Tel: 01355 903105. Email: peter.anna.hendrie@blueyonder.co.uk.

Dundee. Ian Ratcliffe, 12 Finlow Terrace Dundee, DD4 9NA, Tel 01382 541643

Kilmarnock. Meets last Thursday of month 7pm-9pm at the Wheatsheaf pub (about 2 minutes from bus station). Paul Edwards. Tel: 01563 541138. Email: rainbow3@btopenworld.com

Lothian Socialist Discussion @Autonomous Centre Edinburgh, ACE, 17 West Montgomery Place, Edinburgh EH7 5HA. Meets 4th Wednesday of each month 7.30-9.00pm. Tel: F.Anderson 07724 082753.

WALES

Swansea branch. Meets 2nd Mon, 7.30pm, Unitarian Church, High Street. Corres: Geoffrey Williams, 19 Baptist Well Street, Waun Wen, Swansea SA1 6FB.
Tel: 01792 643624

Cardiff and District. Corres: Richard Botterill, 21 Pen-Y-Bryn Rd, Gabalfa, Cardiff, CF14 3LG. Tel: 02920-615826 Email: botterillr@gmail.com

Llandudno

Contact: Gareth Whitley - Email: gwhitley@hotmail.co.uk

INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS

Latin America. J.M. Morel, Calle 7 edif 45 apto 102, Multis nuevo La loteria, La Vega, Rep. Dominicana.

AFRICA

Kenya. Patrick Ndege, PO Box 78105, Nairobi.

Swaziland. Mandla Ntshakala, PO Box 981, Manzini.

Zambia. Kephas Mulenga, PO Box 280168, Kitwe.

ASIA

Japan. Michael. Email: japan.wsm@gmail.com

AUSTRALIA

Trevor Clarke, wspa.info@yahoo.com.au

EUROPE

Denmark. Graham Taylor, Kjaerslund 9, floor 2 (middle), DK-8260 Viby J

Germany. Norbert.

E-mail: weltsozialismus@gmx.net

Norway. Robert Stafford.

Email: hallblithe@yahoo.com

Italy. Gian Maria Freddi, Via Felice Casorati n. 6A, 37131 Verona

Spain. Alberto Gordillo, Avenida del Parque 2/2/3 Puerta A, 13200 Manzanares.

COMPANION PARTIES OVERSEAS

Socialist Party of Canada/Parti Socialiste du Canada. Box 4280, Victoria B.C. V8X 3X8 Canada.

Email: SPC@iname.com

World Socialist Party (India) 257 Baghajatin 'E' Block (East), Kolkata - 700086, Tel: 033-2425-0208, Email: wspindia@hotmail.com

World Socialist Party (New Zealand) P.O. Box 1929, Auckland, NI, New Zealand.

World Socialist Party of the United States P.O. Box 440247, Boston, MA 02144 USA.

Email: boston@wspus.org

Introducing The Socialist Party

The Socialist Party is like no other political party in Britain. It is made up of people who have joined together because we want to get rid of the profit system and establish real socialism. Our aim is to persuade others to become socialist and act for themselves, organising democratically and without leaders, to bring about the kind of society that we are advocating in this journal. We are solely concerned with building a movement of socialists for socialism. We are not a reformist party with a programme of policies to patch up capitalism.

We use every possible opportunity to make

new socialists. We publish pamphlets and books, as well as CDs, DVDs and various other informative material. We also give talks and take part in debates; attend rallies, meetings and demos; run educational conferences; host internet discussion forums, make films presenting our ideas, and contest elections when practical. Socialist literature is available in Arabic, Bengali, Dutch, Esperanto, French, German, Italian, Polish, Spanish, Swedish and Turkish as well as English.

The more of you who join The Socialist Party the more we will be able to get our ideas across, the more experiences we

will be able to draw on and greater will be the new ideas for building the movement which you will be able to bring us.

The Socialist Party is an organisation of equals. There is no leader and there are no followers. So, if you are going to join we want you to be sure that you agree fully with what we stand for and that we are satisfied that you understand the case for socialism.

If you would like more details about The Socialist Party, complete and return the form on page 23.



socialist standard

Editorial

SEPTEMBER 2014

Is it better to be exploited by one's fellow-countrymen?

'If they speak consciously and openly to the working class, then they summarise their philanthropy in the following words: It is better to be exploited by one's fellow-countrymen than by foreigners.' (Marx, 1848)

A SEPARATE parliament in Scotland would be a capitalist parliament. It would not provide Scottish workers with any greater control over their own lives. Scotland would remain an integral part of international capitalism. An Edinburgh sovereign parliament will leave the workers in exactly the same position as before.

Scottish nationalism is the reaction of one section of the Scottish capitalist class to what they perceive as the declining fortunes of British capitalism and their 'unequal' treatment within it. They seek to keep the taxes on North Sea oil revenues and create a corporate tax structure more suited to their own needs. The SNP advocate industrial harmony and an end to class conflict. They entice Scottish workers with offers of a reformist programme and wild promises of more money and a better life. But no natural resources will be put to a sensible or beneficial use until the working class itself has gained control over the use of these valuable and non-renewable resources.

The question of independence threatens relations between English/Welsh and Scottish workers. Scottish workers are asked to place their trust in the local employing class rather than in unity with other workers. United working-class action cannot be easily achieved by insisting that there are supposed national differences in consciousness that distinguish Scottish workers from, say, their English brothers and sisters. And certainly it is not aided by combining with particular Scottish bosses, which lead Scots working people to identify with

Scottish businessmen and landowners on the basis of shared 'nationality'.

Working class unity enables us to combine our tactics for defending our class with the strategy of liberating our class. Socialists do not fall into the trap of the 'progressive' facade of nationalism. The success of the right-wing Ukrainian and Russian nationalists shows the danger of believing that radical nationalist slogans always lead to radical results. Scottish nationalism does not strengthen the campaign for socialism or create a united, class-conscious working class, but fragments and weakens it.

To those who are in the 'Yes' camp, we are saying independence will not improve your condition one iota. Only class struggle could do that and only with difficulty. Any success or otherwise of any workers' movement in Scotland depends on close ties with similar movements in England (and elsewhere). At the same time, we are not defending 'British nationalism' and the unity of the United Kingdom in any way. That would be an endorsement for the status quo, something we do not support. So we do not argue that the present constitutional arrangement benefits ordinary people either. The liberation for Scottish workers can only come about by overthrowing capitalism itself. If this is not done, no amount of separatism can ever succeed in bringing freedom. Instead of tragically wasting time fostering nationalism, workers should be struggling for a socialist society without national borders.

'Because the condition of the workers of all countries is the same, because their interests are the same, their enemies the same, they must also fight together, they must oppose the brotherhood of the bourgeoisie of all nations with a brotherhood of the workers of all nations.' - Engels, November 29, 1847.

Tomorrow's People

TO THOSE unfortunate enough to be waiting for exam results, their whole future turning on a single envelope, this summer's heatwave can't have brought much pleasure. In the event, A level grades were slightly down on previous years as the government has striven to make exams harder (to combat the so-called Flynn effect of rising grades with no accompanying rising ability), but university admissions have gone up, as governments have continued to push more students into higher education despite the crucifying burden of costs now expected to be borne by those same students.

Those still at school can hardly fail to be aware of ongoing changes to education policy with the introduction of holiday fines for parents taking 'French leave' from term-time attendance. And there has been ominous talk of extending the school day until, horrors, 6pm.

So for anyone reading this who finds themselves wondering why the government just can't seem to leave education policy the f*** alone, and why they keep interfering with child and parental rights in such a petty, condescending and high-handed manner, we present the business guide to the capitalist school.

It all starts with evolution. There's not much doubt that genes play a part in innate ability or 'predispositions', but nobody knows which and by how much genes are involved, say, in making someone good at maths or music. No single gene ever does one single thing, but performs multiple operations which themselves have cascading effects on other genes, in a process known as pleiotropy. Lucky for us it's so complicated, in a way. If science were ever able to untangle the byzantine complexity of gene expression it would certainly lead to a Brave New World, akin to genetic feudalism, where you were fated to be a space scientist or fated to be a street cleaner and there wouldn't be a damned thing you could do about it.

In the absence of this marvellous state of affairs, the captains of industry who are interested in mining future generations of talent have a bit of a problem. Capitalist cultural institutions are organised hierarchically, with rich kids getting into all the best schools and universities, their lives set fair for comfort and privilege, while poor kids are generally directed towards the Gates of the McJob Underworld with the words 'Abandon hope all ye who enter here' over the portal.

The problem for the captains is that evolution doesn't follow social hierarchies, and 'good genes' tend to be distributed randomly, and horizontally, through the population. Nobody knows where they are or what they look like, and only careful development and processing will bring them to the fore. In consigning poor kids to poor education, capitalist social hierarchies are effectively throwing away more than half the potential talent. Any mining company knows that you don't make money by chucking most of your gold on the slag pile.

But there's another problem, which is that old workers are refusing to die off in the obliging manner they used to, and the costs of keeping these generally unexploitable people alive are spiralling, costs which are ultimately borne by the same captains of industry who are trying to reduce wastage. Future generations of workers are going to have to work harder, faster, smarter and longer to make up for these increasing costs, as well as pay back their student loans. After six years of recession, with no guarantee of a decent job, the educational incentives are shrinking. Among those with student loans (ie students without rich parents) the current loan write-off estimate stands at 45 percent, barely above the state's break-even level (*Guardian*, 21 March). The kids are not alright, and the captains are not happy about it either.

The captains' union – the Confederation of British Industry – regularly updates the government (it doesn't matter which one) with their requirements. Tomorrow's worker is expected to have a skill set that would have looked like science fiction a generation ago. But above all, the state must do something about wastage. Hence all the tinkering, for example the following:

Poor kids tend to leave school earlier in order to bring money into deprived households, and they have lately been doing so in increasing numbers. Now the law has changed so that they will have to remain in education until 18. They'll probably end up working nights, the poor sods.

Everybody knows about the law of supply and demand. Holiday companies tend to make a loss in the off-peak season and recoup their losses in high season, tripling or quadrupling prices. Naturally this doesn't affect rich kids, but poor families, if they want any kind of decent quality of life including an annual holiday, have been in the habit of playing truant from school to get the low-season prices. A day here or

there may not matter too much, but across a generation of kids the weeks and months add up. Poor kids miss school more than rich ones. More disadvantage, more wastage.

In secondary schools, kids get around 2 hours of homework per night. This is not a problem for rich kids, who have supportive and motivated parents to help. But poor kids frequently have home environments which are not conducive to homework, and the social attitudes of poor families are often hostile to academic achievement (after all, what did school ever do for them?). So rich kids do their homework and poor kids don't. But if the 2 hours homework was done in school time instead, the advantage enjoyed by rich kids would in theory evaporate. Hence the desperate talk of extending the school day, in the teeth of union opposition ('Michael Gove's plans for longer school day dealt 'huge blow', *Telegraph*, 13 February).

The capitalist school system is essentially an extractive and refinery business, confronted in the world market by brutal competition on all sides. The traditional institutions of class privilege in individual countries tend to blunt their competitive edge, which is why capitalism, from the individual standpoint of a poor worker, can sometimes look progressive and even egalitarian. Money talks, not birth or background. Capitalism wants to plunder the workforce for everything it's got, and it expects tomorrow's people to be the smartest that have ever lived.

If you don't like the idea of being mined and extracted, processed, refined, developed, graded and squeezed dry your entire life, join the club. And there is a club. You should join the people who want to abolish the commodity system. To get off the conveyor belt, you have to help shut down the conveyor belt.

Socialist education won't be like this, because socialist society won't be an endless competitive war of all against all, but a supportive and human-centred environment where a child's development could proceed naturally, at its own pace and in the direction of the child's own inclinations. Children learn best what they want to learn most, and socialism is defined by the philosophy that individuals blossom when able to determine their own needs, and shrivel when they are not. The people of tomorrow's socialism won't be commodities to be bought and sold, used and discarded, like so much pig iron and slag. They will be people whose desires, motivations, hopes and genetic predispositions are allowed to shape an individual path towards fulfilment and self-realisation, producing a flowering of art and science we can only guess at. These people, not their enslaved forebears, will be the smartest who ever lived, and quite probably the happiest. **PJS**



Stone Age violence: old or new?

Dear Editors

Thanks for sending me this article. As you guessed, I'm not convinced. The evidence for lethal violence goes back well beyond the neolithic revolution (there's a fairly recent list of examples going back at least 500,000 years available in Table S2 of www.pnas.org/content/suppl/2011/11/14/1117113108.DCSupplemental/pnas.201117113108.pdf#nameddest=ST2), and there are large massacre sites from about 11,000 BC onward. The arithmetic in the article is also misleading. A rate of violent death of 10-20% would mean that your group of 30 HGs would experience 3-6 violent deaths per 30-year generation, which means one killing per 5-10 years. The level of killing mentioned in the article, of 3-6 people per year, would add up to 90-180 violent deaths per 30-year generation, or a rate of 300-600%. That obviously makes no sense, and whoever wrote that paragraph should have realized that he or she had got the sums seriously wrong. On Palaeolithic demography, the skeletal evidence is very clear that the modal adult age at death was somewhere in the thirties, not 72. And Gurven and Kaplan aren't saying that the modal age at death among Palaeolithic hunter gatherers was 72; if you look at their Figure 1d, it shows that they estimate that only 20% of h-g's would have still been alive at 70. If you discount the 40-45% of people who died by age 15, the modal age at death for adults is still going to be somewhere in the early 40s. And one other factual point — whoever wrote the article can't seem to decide whether my name is Morris or Harris.

I think the article also gives Steven Pinker both too much blame and too much praise. The real starting place for the new understanding of prehistoric violence is Larry Keeler's 1996 book *War Before Civilization*, and the most important analysis extending this perspective through historically documented times is Azar Gat's 2006 *War in Human Civilization*. Pinker certainly did an impressive job in *The Better Angels of Our Natures*, but he shouldn't have to bear the lion's share of the criticisms. I'm also kind of baffled about why so many people want to make this debate a left-right issue. I was just today interviewed on a radio show in Washington called 'Left Jab,' which is very left of center, and they didn't seem to think the new understanding of the history of violence was a right-wing plot. When Marx and Engels

wrote about prehistory they used the most up-to-date scholarship then available, but back in the 1870s and 1880s archaeologists basically knew almost nothing about anything before 1000 BC. If Engels were writing his *Origins* today, it would be a very different book.

It sounds like this article was just talking about the short essay I wrote for *New Scientist*. If you have time to look at the book that was summarizing, I'd be interested to hear if you still feel the same way.

IAN MORRIS (by email)

Reply: We're sorry about the mix up over names.

The evidence in Table S2 shows various injuries to the cranium, thorax, ribs, pelvis, shins and feet, most of which also show subsequent bone regrowth and/or infection or osteoarthritis, meaning that the victim usually survived. It's not obvious what caused the injuries, however the presence at the Lion Rock site in China of bones from rhinoceros, bear, wild dog, hyena and tiger invites an easy speculation. Life in the Pleistocene could well have been risky, even dangerous in places, but it seems a leap on this evidence to guess that the main source of human injuries was other humans.

In the study we cited, Gurven and Kaplan discuss severe difficulties in reconstructing prehistoric life tables because of systematic biases in bone ageing techniques, and then state that 'while excessive warfare could explain the shape of one or more of these typical prehistoric forager mortality profiles, it is improbable that these profiles represent the long-term prehistoric forager mortality profile. Such rapid mortality increase late in life would have severe consequences for our human life history evolution...' (p 345), which is pretty much what we said in the article.

The *New Scientist* article was necessarily short but it ought to have stated that the 10-20 percent fatality estimate was per generation, not per year, which omission of course was the source of our claim that the loss rate was absurdly unsustainable. Even at this lower rate, common sense suggests that small HG bands would regard *any* loss as too costly and therefore do everything in their power to avoid conflict, probably by moving away, a tactic which perhaps drove migration but which became increasingly difficult in the settled Neolithic.

We do know, through figurines, that sex and fertility were considered highly important in the Upper

Paleolithic, and animals and hunting were regular features of cave art. Of all the cave paintings known from this period, not one shows human violence against other humans, in contrast to later Neolithic art where it is prominent.

There is not merely an absence of evidence, there is evidence of absence. The Paleo-Neolithic settlement of Tell Abu Hureyra, near the Euphrates, showed 4,000 years of continuous occupation with no signs of violence (John Horgan, *Scientific American* blog, 29 June 2010).

According to the Wikipedia entry on the Paleolithic, towns of this period 'are generally unfortified and built in areas difficult to defend. Skeletal and burial remains do not generally indicate the presence of warfare.' In studies of 21 modern forager bands (*Scientific American*, 18 July) three had no lethal events at all and only one showed behaviour described as 'war' — the conclusion being that violence was not an innate behaviour of such groups but once initiated could become self-perpetuating through blood feuds. It doesn't seem unreasonable to suppose that this could have happened in the Paleolithic, however it was probably the exception not the rule.

So we don't think the Paleolithic was a playground or a love-in, and the socialist case certainly doesn't require this to be so, but if advocates of the 'ignoble savage' hypothesis want to overturn the accepted textbook narrative of this period, according to which war and organised violence first arose in the Neolithic, they are going to have to do better than the arguments they currently have. If Professor Morris really wants to make the extraordinary claim that 'war is good for us', based on his interpretation of human prehistory, he can hardly be surprised when some of us demand to see extraordinary evidence to support it.—*Editors*.

Betrayal

Dear Editors

As usual I found the article on 'The Economic Causes of the First World War' authoritative and convincing. I was, however, surprised that you made no reference to the betrayal by the reformist left in Germany of the 'Second International'. There, of course, can be no doubt that this organisation never possessed a majority with socialist consciousness but I think it is important to highlight the inevitable consequences of reformist

continued page 20



Getting a Prophet?

IT CAN be a bit embarrassing, can't it, when after a night of seriously heavy drinking and getting completely out of your skull, you climb onto the bar and, with your trousers round your ankles, belt out all the Dolly Parton songs you can remember. Or, nearly as bad, informing that stranger in the white robes and dodgy beard that you meet on the way home that he is definitely your best mate, and deciding, on the spot, to convert to Islam.

Well, depending on what you've done, help may now be at hand (as long as it wasn't the Dolly Parton thing. If that's what you've done the humiliation will probably remain for the rest of your life). But if it was a simple mistake like signing up to become a Muslim you can be helped.

As the fog of alcohol slowly clears and you lay in the gutter drifting in and out of consciousness you begin to realise, with horror, that you don't even know the basic rules of the religion. Your brain wrestles with the questions that start flooding in: am I still allowed to eat pork scratchings in the pub on Friday nights? How long will it take to grow a full, heavy-duty, Islamic approved beard? Which of my female relatives must now dress from head to foot in black bin liners? Will they now have to walk ten paces behind me, or is that the other lot? But try to stay calm. If it is, indeed, Islam that you've joined you are in luck. They have produced a handy little book that explains it all.

The *New Muslim Guide* it's called, and packed into its 250-odd pages are everything you need to know. (Well, not quite everything, there doesn't seem to be anything about chopping off the hands of thieves, stoning adulterers to death, or when it's ok to beat your wife). But just about everything else is there. Although, occasionally, it's not completely clear what the prophet was on about.

'Sometimes I fast and sometimes I don't,' he apparently once said. 'I engage in night prayer and I also sleep, and I marry women. Therefore, whoever does not follow my practice is not one of my true followers'. What he was getting at there is anyone's guess. No wonder there's a bit of confusion between the Shias and the Sunnis. But there you go. English probably wasn't his first language.

But stick with it, there's a hell of a lot to learn. We don't have room to cover it in detail so here are a few of the highlights. It must be understood though, that to ensure your place

in paradise you will probably need to read the whole book. Admitting when you get there that you've only read a review of it in the *Socialist Standard* is not going to impress the prophet.

We must, however, include a few snippets that we feel should not be missed. Careful note of these will certainly earn you a few extra brownie points:

'The very moment a person embraces Islam is doubtless the greatest moment in his life' we are told. 'Now that he has entered the fold of Islam, he is recommended to take a bath'. The removal of pubic and underarm hair is also required by 'plucking it or by using any other means to serve the purpose'.

Unless the meaning of your pre-Islamic name contradicts Islamic beliefs it need not be changed. Otherwise it must be. Recommended new ones include 'Abdullah' (Slave of Allah) and 'Abdur-Rahmaan' (Slave of the Most Gracious). Well, a new name will help you remember your place, won't it?

'Firm belief that Almighty Allah will raise people to life from their graves' is also required. 'Those who deserve to go to Paradise will be sent to it, while those who deserve to go to Hellfire will be sent to it'. So anyone thinking about converting from Christianity should consider carefully whether the amenities of the Islamic heaven and hell are up to the standard of the Christian ones. You may, after all, be there for some time.

And before you finally convert to Islam consider how would their ideas stand up in a debate against, say, the Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster for example? He has far fewer rules, and his followers realise that he doesn't actually exist. Remember too, you are allowed to draw cartoons of the Spaghetti Monster. (Peace be upon him).

NW



Dira Square in Riyadh, known to locals as Chop Chop Square, where executions are held

Putin rehabilitates World War One

THE EMBALMED corpse of Lenin must have turned over after hearing Putin's speech in August at the unveiling of a monument to Russian First World War 'heroes'.

Putin's speech (eng.kremlin.ru/news/22756) sought to rehabilitate the First World War and use it to bolster Russian nationalism and capitalism. Putin is busily rewriting Russian history; 'Russia did everything it could to convince Europe to find a peaceful and bloodless solution' but Russia as a world power was as culpable as all the western capitalist states. He spoke of 'our people's spiritual and moral upsurge at that moment' which is bunkum considering Russia was a semi-feudal, autocratic Tsarist Empire with no democracy and the peasantry just a couple of generations away from serfdom. Maybe he was talking about the priest Rasputin 'lathering up' the Russian Empress.

According to him, 'our country had no choice but to rise to the challenge, defend a brotherly Slavic people and protect our own country and people from the foreign threat.' He even glorifies the 1916 Brusilov offensive which cost the Russians a million casualties. 'Victory', he claims, 'was stolen from our country. It was stolen by those who called for the defeat of their homeland and army, who sowed division inside Russia and sought only power for themselves, betraying the national interests' when in fact it was the Russian peasant and proletarian soldiers in the army who walked away from the front and demanded land, bread and an end to the slaughter. We hold no brief for Lenin and the Bolsheviks but we can recognise that the one good thing they did, in response to Russian soldiers voting against the war with their feet, was to take Russia out of the First World War. Putin would have sent millions more to the slaughter.

SPC

Not something to get used to

WHEN AT the end of July the official figures for the UK Gross Domestic Product in the second quarter of 2014 were announced – an increase of 0.8 percent, which brought GDP back to the level it had been before the slump started in 2008 – the politicians and media who support the government were jubilant. The crisis is over, they proclaimed. Others were more circumspect about what this meant or, rather, did not mean. Anthony Hilton, Economics Editor of the London *Evening Standard*, even wrote that ‘the next set of output figures should top pre-recession levels – but it is good news only for a privileged few’ as ‘we now live in an economy where the rewards from growth or globalisation go to an ever narrower elite’ (24 July).

The figures certainly meant that production had reached its pre-slump level but this did not mean that the crisis was over for most people in the sense that their standard of living was back to what it was in 2008. GDP had reached its pre-slump level but GDP per person had not. This was because the population has also increased since 2008. GDP per person is not expected to reach its pre-slump level for another three years.

GDP per person is not really a measure of standard of living as it says nothing about how what has been produced is distributed. The figure would be the same whether everybody was getting an equal share or whether a few were getting a very large share with the rest below the average. Or something in between. As Hilton pointed out:

‘Total output matters but what matters more in terms of individual wellbeing is how the output is spread around. It does not matter how big the cake has grown if you only qualify for a small slice – or possibly something even smaller – than you did a few years ago. Sadly, an ever smaller slice is the reality for most people these days.’

This was confirmed by an article in the *Times* (16 July) by Ed Conway, Sky News Economics Editor, headed ‘Feeling worse off is the new reality and workers should get used to it’ which started:

‘Were you in any doubt about the scale of the depression Britain is now emerging from, consider the following: real wages, adjusted for inflation, have fallen more in the past five years than in any comparable period in a century and a half. Not since 1864, when vaguely reliable data began, have our living standards been squeezed so much ... [N]ever before has there been a five-year period with as sustained, significant and sizeable fall in family earnings as the one now coming to an end. Between 2009 and 2013 real wages dropped by 8 per cent.’

Real wages (what take-home pay will buy) is a better measure of individuals’ standard of living than GDP per person. If the slump in production is over, as it appears to be, real wages will begin to rise again but, according to Conway, at a much slower rate than before. He suggested about 1 percent a year. In that case it could take another seven or eight years for people’s standard of living to reach its pre-slump level. Meanwhile the rich get even richer.

PUBLICATIONS ORDER FORM

PAMPHLETS

Price and Qty

An Inconvenient Question: Socialism and The Environment.....	£2.00	x _____
What’s Wrong With Using Parliament?.....	£1.00	x _____
Ecology and Socialism.....	£1.00	x _____
From Capitalism to Socialism: how we live and how we could live....	£1.00	x _____
Africa: A Marxian Analysis.....	£1.50	x _____
Socialism As a Practical Alternative.....	£1.00	x _____
Some Aspects of Marxian Economics.....	£2.00	x _____
How the Gods Were Made.....	£1.50	x _____
Marxism and Darwinism by Anton Pannekoek.....	£1.50	x _____
How we Live and How we Might Live by William Morris.....	£1.50	x _____
The Right to be Lazy and other articles by Paul Lafargue.....	£2.00	x _____
Marxism Revisited.....	£2.00	x _____
Socialist Principles Explained.....	£2.00	x _____
All the above pamphlets (25% discount).....	£15.00	x _____

BOOKS

Strange Meeting: Socialism and World War One.....	£4.50	x _____
A Socialist Life by Heather Ball.....	£3.75	x _____
Are We Prisoners Of Our Genes?.....	£4.75	x _____
Socialism Or Your Money Back (reduced from £9.95).....	£4.00	x _____
All the above books and pamphlets (25% discount).....	£20.00	x _____

DVD

Capitalism and Other Kids’ Stuff.....	£5.75	x _____
Poles Apart? Capitalism or socialism as the planet heats up.....	£5.75	x _____

TOTAL£ _____

All prices include postage and packing. For six or more of any publication, reduce the price by one third.

Return this form along with your cheque or money order to:

The Socialist Party of Great Britain, FREEPOST, London, SW4 7BR, United Kingdom.

(No postage necessary if mailed within the UK)

NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

.....

.....

City.....

..... Postcode.....

County.....

PHONE (optional).....

E-MAIL (optional).....

China's *Wild West*



Uighurs at a market in Kashgar, 2005

CHINESE AUTHORITIES this year imposed restrictions on Uighur Muslims during the month of Ramadan, banning government employees and school children from fasting. They justified the ban by saying it is meant to protect the health of students, and restrictions on religious practices by government officials are meant to ensure the state does not support any particular faith. Along with government employees, children under the age of 18 are barred from attending mosques. For centuries, parents sent their children to makhtaps, part-time schools at the mosque, where they memorised the Quran – but this practice, along with most organised religious instruction, is now prohibited. Under Chinese law, only state-approved copies of Islamic literature like the Quran are allowed. Human rights groups say it is an attempt at systematically erasing the region's Islamic identity. This is not about atheism, but political control. Uighur resentment toward Chinese rule has been reinforced by China's policies of cultural 'genocide' on Uighur identity, religious beliefs and practices.

Xinjiang has a majority Muslim Uighur population – a Turkic ethnic group with a language and culture closer to Central Asia who scholars consider to be descendants of a mix of European and East Asian. Uighurs are classified as a 'national minority' rather than an indigenous group—in other words, they are considered to be no more indigenous to Xinjiang than the Han, and have no special rights to the land under the law. The region is home to some of China's largest deposits of oil, natural gas, and coal. Before the region was absorbed into the People's Republic of China in 1949, almost everyone was Uighur, but the numbers have since declined, dropping to below half by the year 2000, as tens of millions of Han Chinese were encouraged to settle by the government, who provided jobs, housing, bank loans and economic opportunities denied to Uighurs. The same story as in Tibet, Manchuria and Mongolia. It is sad but in these instances there are only two options: assimilation or confrontation.

On 1 March 2014, a group of Uighurs with knives attacked people at the Kunming Railway Station killing at least 29 and injuring 130 others.

On 18 April 2014, a group of 16 Uighur refugees engaged in a shootout with Vietnamese border guards after seizing their guns as they were being detained to be returned to China.

On 30 April 2014, two attackers stabbed people before detonating their suicide vests at an Ürümqi train station.

On 22 May 2014, twin suicide car bombings occurred after the occupants had thrown multiple

explosives out of their vehicles at an Ürümqi street market. The attacks killed 31 people and injured more than 90.

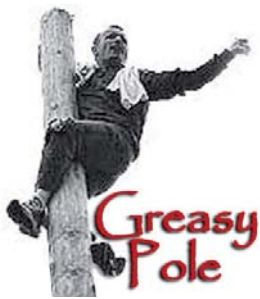
Such acts provided the Chinese government with the excuse for its propaganda that it faces a Muslim terrorist threat, in order to win public opinion both in China and the world and silence criticism of its neo-colonialism.

China claims that 'Xinjiang has been an inalienable part of China since ancient times', Xinjiang in Chinese literally means 'New Territory'. The use of 'East Turkestan' by Uighurs is criminalised. The Chinese Red Army occupied the short-lived East Turkestan Republic in October 1949 and pacified the people through executions and massacres. Tens of thousands of Uighurs were killed in China's conquest of East Turkestan. The promised self-rule was soon reneged on after annexation and the 'Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region' established in 1955. Chinese state corporations exploited the huge reserves of natural gas, oil, gold, uranium, coal and other minerals found in the region. What is more, China tested 45 nuclear devices, both under and above ground, between 1964 and 1996 in East Turkestan, polluting air, water and soil with radiation.

Chinese soldiers' have been accused of extrajudicial and indiscriminate killings of Uighur men, women and children. This systematic repression of Uighur people and their subsequent resistance to it, has been described as a fight against 'Islamic terrorism'. Moderate Uighurs such as Professor İlham Tohti and linguist Abduweli Ayup who had tried to work within the Chinese system were denounced and arrested. Others out of desperation have committed horrific acts of political violence against not only Chinese security forces, but also against settlers. The July 2009 Ürümqi riots were a series of violent riots over several days that broke out in the capital city of Xinjiang and targeted Han Chinese. A total of 197 people died.

This oppression is all the worse for being done in the name of socialism whereas socialism 'will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex'.

ALJO



Dobson drops out?

engage you in gossip. Imagine you once saw yourself as the ideal choice for the most prestigious and demanding job in the capital except that nobody of any influence agreed with you. Imagine you held a series of ministerial jobs but were demoted and retired to the back benches to attract attention by your beard and heavy-handed jokes. Imagine you are Frank Dobson, who recently announced that after 35 years he will not stand again to be the MP for Holborn and St. Pancras – which stimulated the appetites of some powerful and hungry hopefuls to succeed him.

Bruiser

Appropriately for someone born in York, Dobson came from what is often called up there a railway family. He then switched to the more fertile environs of the capital. Along the way, in 1971 he was elected as a councillor for the London Borough of Camden with its reputation as a hotbed of the wildest leftwing delusions, asserted by their flying the Red Flag above the Town Hall. Dobson's experience as a councillor locally made him the obvious choice as the parliamentary Labour candidate for Holborn and St. Pancras, where he won in the 1979 general election and which he has held since. His reputation as a bit of a bruiser – and perhaps also for re-circulating 'dirty' jokes along with the equally unremarkable clean ones – marked him down as promotion material for a future Blair government. In this he was helped when in 1994 he led the Labour Party response to the infamous 'homes for votes' policy of Westminster Council, driven by the Tesco heiress Lady Shirley Porter who evaded an Order from the Law Lords to repay £27 million of the ill-gotten gains by staying for a while in Israel (eventually coughing up £12 million).

NHS

As a rapturous Tony Blair swirled through Number Ten, his first job was to organise a team of ministers who could deal with the changes imposed by the previous Tory government. In this the NHS was a priority so that his appointment of Dobson as the minister responsible was particularly significant. But he was not completely satisfied with his choice: 'At the helm of the NHS, I had put Frank Dobson. This, in itself, indicates how little I understood when first in office... He was one of many who considered New Labour a clever wheeze to win'. Yet there was evidence that Dobson's problems were deeper seated. In the 1981 election of Labour party officers he voted for Tony Benn until the pressures of reality disillusioned him so that he said he preferred 'sane left' leaders; examples were Neil Kinnock, Ed Miliband and Blair himself ('who else was there?' Dobson helplessly asked).

London Mayor

Late in 1999 Dobson was lined up to be wangled out of the Commons and was internally selected by Labour to stand as their candidate in the inaugural election for

Mayor of London (a choice which stank, according to then MP Chris Mullin). A small problem for him was that in the election itself he would be up against the seasoned, subtle Ken Livingstone standing as an independent (which was a breach of his solemn assurance that he would not be a candidate, but never mind – we are talking politics here). Blair assessed Dobson's chances 'about as much as ... Steptoe and Son's horse had of winning the Grand National'. Livingstone beat Dobson humiliatingly into third place, which left him bitterly to reflect on the fact that his successor in charge of the nation's health was Alan Milburn, once a left-wing bibliophile who ran the 'Days Of Hope' radical bookshop but then built himself into a millionaire consultant for massive private companies such as Lloyds Pharmacy and Pepsi; apart from those he set up his own very lucrative media company.

Bribery

In the general election of 2001 Dobson was re-elected and quickly confronted with the realities of matching what he might have called his conscience with what the Whips would have been aware of as his ambitions. In 2003 there were some votes in the Commons on the issue of the war in Iraq. The Attorney General Goldsmith had done the work needed to enable Blair to claim that an invasion of that country would be legal. As if that would have made any real difference. Dobson was treated as a possible rebel in the intended Commons debates and he was offered the job of High Commissioner to the Republic of South Africa as a bribe for supporting the government. But that was not effective enough to deter him. The war went ahead and we are now reminded, day after day, of the merciless futility of it all, in the fighting and the desperate plight of the people there.

Starmer

In June 2011 Dobson was the focus of media attention because he was a tenant in a flat owned by Camden Council; he said he did not know how much rent he paid, which triggered some lurid speculation (one guess was £160 a week when other flats in the same luxurious building went for £1000). This, with the fact that he and his wife have a comfortable joint income and own a large property in Yorkshire, did not help him keep his image of a lovable eccentric. Tessa Jowell, who was one of his junior ministers, recalls him padding about the ministry office without his shoes on, at times with a bare toe peeping through a hole in his sock: 'We all absolutely adored him. I love him – he's a person of incredible generosity and loyalty'.

Among Dobson's other fans, one of the more likely successors for Holborn and St. Pancras, is Sir Keir Starmer who as a KCB and a QC and ex-Director of the Crown Prosecution Service is unlikely to unbalance his staff by showing them his bare toes. Unless he were to have the same effect by his view of the political situation: 'It would be an honour for anyone to succeed Frank Dobson . . . Our constituency needs an MP who will be able to influence a future Labour government' – something which the tempestuous, unachieving life and times of Frank Dobson exposed as impossible.

IVAN



Above: Frank Dobson.
Right: Keir Starmer



Neither 'Yes' nor 'No' but World Socialism

In March the Scottish nationalist website Bella Caledonia interviewed 'veteran leftwinger' Tariq Ali after he called for a 'Yes' vote in this month's referendum in Scotland. We disagree.

'Scottish Labour politicians claim they speak for internationalism, and often accuse independence supporters of parochialism and petty nationalism. As an internationalist living in London, why are you supporting independence?'

This was first question put to Tariq Ali. It is true that the supporters of Scottish formal 'independence' (any meaningful economic independence is impossible in today's interdependent world) are promoting 'petty nationalism' but, as Tariq Ali rightly replied, the Scottish Labour politicians opposed to it are not internationalists. They are British nationalists. But then he played on the ambiguity of the word 'internationalist' to argue that to be one didn't mean you had to be anti-nationalist and so there was nothing incoherent about him supporting Scottish nationalism. This is indeed one meaning of the word – an internationalist as an inter-nationalist who stands for friendly relations between 'nations'. In other words, someone who accepts the sense and legitimacy of nations, nationalism and the nation-state. It is because of this that we prefer to call ourselves 'world' rather than 'international' socialists. In our view, the nation-state is a capitalist political form and the nationalism they cultivate divides the world working class. Bella Caledonia took up this in one of their other questions:

'A lot of socialists would deny that there is something particularly toxic about the British state, and would say that all capitalist states are bad.'

We are not sure whether a lot of people say that all capitalist states are bad, but that's essentially our position. Tariq Ali conceded that 'on one level, it can be said that the capitalist economy of these states is more or less the same' but went on to argue that different states have different peculiarities. The British state, he said, needed 'modernisation' by which he meant that the monarchy and the House of Lords needed to be abolished. In fact the main reason why he

supports Scottish independence seems to be because he feels that a breakaway by Scotland will help achieve this (the interview is headed 'Dismantling the British State'). This is similar to the reason Marx gave in the 1860s and 70s for supporting Irish independence but that was 150 years ago and since then the British state has been 'modernised', ie the political power that the landed aristocracy wielded in Marx's day has been broken and the state is now completely controlled by the capitalist class via universal suffrage. In any event, though socialists are interested in there being political democracy, we are not interested in making any capitalist state more efficient and fit for purpose. Tariq Ali finished his answer to this question with the jibe (and non-sequitur): 'of course, you can argue that since capitalism is now dominant everywhere, then one shouldn't do anything. But that would be a retreat into total passivity and fatalism.' A more logical conclusion from accepting that capitalism is now dominant everywhere would be to work for its abolition everywhere, but that's not Tariq Ali's view. He wants to retreat into the futility of trying to reform capitalism everywhere, as he made clear in answer to this other question.

'What's your views on the Nordic model and other varieties of capitalism? Can Scotland draw on these ideas?'

To which Tariq Ali replied:

'Well, we're talking about a period in which the capitalist system has triumphed, and the ideas of socialism have suffered a huge defeat globally. So we're living in a very strange transition period, which may well last until the end of the century. One shouldn't exclude that. So one has to operate with what exists, and see how capital in its worst aspects can be regulated, how a state can be regulated that works for the benefit of working people.'

Tariq Ali used to be a 'revolutionary' Trotskyist, but he's now an open reformist. Ironically, just like the Labour Party which he rightly has no time for, he argues that the only choice today is between different varieties of capitalism. Yes, a capitalism which spent more on better education, health, housing and other services would be nice – if you could get it. But you can't, at least not permanently. The post-war Attlee Labour government, which he praises and urges an independent Scottish government to follow, did introduce some reforms which coincided with the general capitalist interest for an educated, healthy and productive (of profit) workforce. But capitalism cannot be 'regulated' to work 'for the benefit of working people'. The priority under capitalism is profit and profit-making and all governments have to accept and abide by this, as the record of all governments including Labour has shown. Some

of them set out to improve things for working people but all of them ended up having to give priority to profits even when this meant making things worse for working people by, for instance, holding down wages, worsening services and cutting benefits.

Bella Caledonia did not pose a specific question about what would happen to the standard of living of workers if Scotland broke away, but Tariq Ali himself did in answer to another question:

'I remember when Tony Blair came on his last tour of Scotland, and he said, If you vote for independence, every family will lose £5,000 a year. Who dreamed up that figure?'

While it is true, as Tariq Ali went on to point out, that this is an arbitrary figure and meant to scare people into voting 'No', it is an argument that the 'Yes' campaign has to face and cannot simply dismiss out of hand. People could become worse off. This is what happened in Ireland when and after it got 'independence'. Tariq Ali's reply was that there's no reason living standards should decline 'if the economy is properly handled.' This amounts to saying that at least people wouldn't be worse off (of course claims that people would be better off are just the usual empty politicians' promise). That may well be true but in that case what's all the

fuss about? If it's not going to make any difference to living standards either way why bother taking sides in the referendum? Who needs to care about the result (apart from the Scottish nationalist politicians who would like to be able to strut on the international stage)? Some (such as these same politicians) will reply that that it's not a sordid, material question but about 'freedom' and 'dignity'. To which we reply: that's just divisive, nationalist rhetoric. It does not deflect us, and should not deflect other workers in Scotland, from talking up the position 'Neither Yes Nor No But World Socialism' and writing this across their ballot paper.

The Socialist Party and the Scottish Referendum

Most of us don't own a single square inch of Scotland. It doesn't belong to us: we just live here and work for the people who do own it. In or out of the Union, that won't change.

In Scotland, society is run in the interests of those who own the wealth. They argue among each other over billions of barrels of oil, GDP rates, profits and exports, because where the borders lie matters to them. Every border is an opportunity to wring cash out of other property owners.

Scotland will remain dependent upon their whims and interests whatever the outcome of the referendum.

They'll try to sway us one way or another with crumbs (or the promises of crumbs) but we'll only get what they feel they can spare to protect their privilege and wealth. We will remain dependent upon their investments, making a profit for them before we can get our needs and interests met.

The only way to stop this dependency would be for us to take ownership and control of the wealth of the world into our own hands. We could, together, use the wealth of the world to meet our mutual needs and gain the true independence of being able to control our work and our lives in a free and voluntary association of equals.

Though the outcome of this referendum is irrelevant, it is an opportunity for us to tell our fellow workers that this is what we want. We don't have to suffer in silence, we can go to the polling stations and put 'NEITHER YES NOR NO BUT WORLD SOCIALISM' on the ballot paper. Then join The Socialist Party to fight for an independent world.



Armed and Dangerous

On 14 July jets led by Air Marshal Thierry Caspar-Fille-Lambie flew over the Avenue des Champs-Élysées, Paris, to commemorate the storming of the Bastille 225 years ago that triggered the advance of French capitalism. Soldiers led by Brigadier Henry Bazin, closely followed by motorised troops led by General Marcel Druart paraded past the President of the French Republic. This celebration of the bourgeois revolution tellingly

deaths.

The Museum's director responded to a petition by over 2,000 signees, who view the Museum as supporting the arms trade, by stating: 'The revenue generated by bookings such as this plays an important role in the funding mix that enables us to remain free to millions of visitors.' Yes, of course. It's all about money. Museums need cash, as does science, as do scientists, who can't dine on principle pie. A large proportion of

whilst the workers in the industry received a wage packet. Amongst these were capitalism's scientists.

Radar, space exploration and communications satellites, nuclear technology, microchips, digital photography, the internet and GPS all have their origins in the killing business. Much earlier mathematics had a role to play in the development of the siege catapult. Even Galileo touted the telescope as a military aid in an effort to gain funds from the Medici court in Florence. In general, though, inventors and craftsmen worked independently from the military developing weapons and then sought their patronage once the product was ready to market. Research and development directed by the military was minimal until the dawn of a new war at the turn of the 20th century.

As much as the civilian population was recruited for the First World War so too was science. Trench warfare, with its use of strongly fortified positions, supported by heavy artillery and machine guns, caused millions of deaths but little strategic advantage. The military minds and their political masters sought new killing technologies and scientists and engineers were employed to deliver them. Tanks and aeroplanes roamed the battlefield but with limited effect. Poison gas however did have an impact—a terrifying psychological one.

Capitalism's ideologies that had successfully mobilised millions of ordinary civilians and turned them into front line killers also worked on scientists. Why shouldn't it? Thus scientists like Fritz Haber, described as the 'father of chemical warfare' and a recipient of the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1918, developed and organised the use of chlorine and other toxic gases employed extensively throughout the First World War. His adversary was the French Nobel laureate chemist Victor Grignard. Haber considered himself a patriot. Decorated and given the rank of captain by the Kaiser even though he was too old to enlist, Haber exposed the poison of nationalism when he penned his rationale: 'During peace time a scientist belongs to the World, but during war time he belongs to his country' (*Science: A Many-Splendored Thing*, 2011).



Bastille Day celebrations, Champs-Élysées, Paris.

illustrates the enduring bond, and historical significance, between the capitalist class and militarism. The theme for 2014 was of course: 'The Centenary of the First World War'. Ten million dead. The President remarked ahead of the parade, 'we owe them gratitude.'

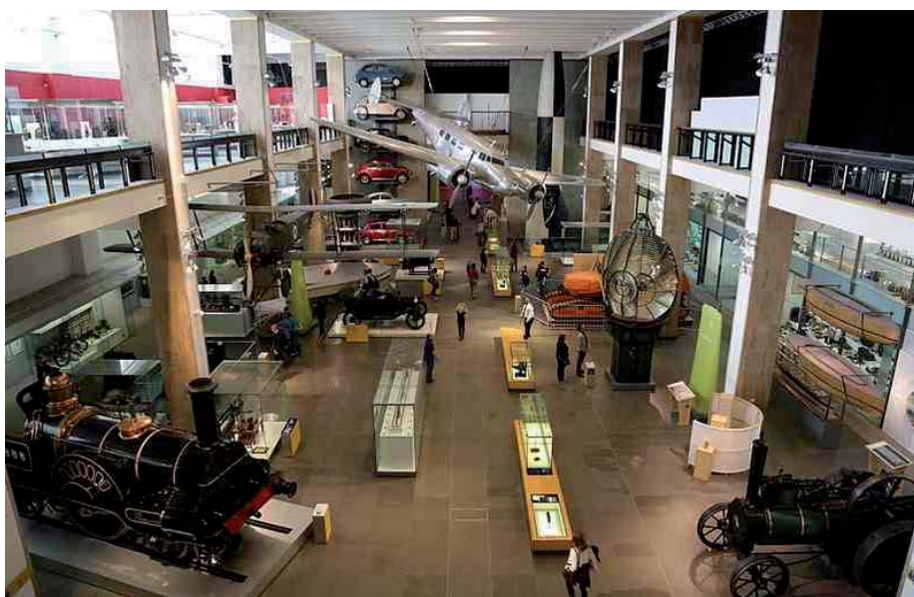
Meanwhile, 200 miles away a tiny gathering of protesters took place outside the Science Museum in West London. Inside, in the museum's Making of the Modern World Gallery, arms dealers from around the world congregated for what the organisers described as the 'most important event during Farnborough week offering an unparalleled opportunity for industry networking'. Farnborough, for the public, is renowned for its Airshow, but behind the glitz and red, white and blue jet trails lies a marketplace where the world's weapons salesmen court military delegations. The consequent marriages invariably end in multiple

science's funding comes from the military. It's a symbiotic relationship under capitalism. The arms trade is as elemental to capitalism as are banks and insurers. States need weapons to defend profits, gain access to new markets, and to acquire raw materials. Typically as the big stick wielded for show, or simply as a veiled threat in negotiations with competitors. And when all else fails they need weapons—to wage war.

The killing business

War is a fundamental consequence of capitalism; since 1900 there have been 247 conflicts with over 77 million fatalities (www.war-memorial.net). Yes, the killing business is always brisk. Since the First World War the character of conflicts has altered. Around 50 percent of those killed in wars in the first half of the last century were civilians. Towards the end it had risen to 90 percent. Vast profits for the manufacturers accrued from these deaths. A handful of capitalists have filled their boots,

The 20th century saw the development of new weapons. Thousands of scientists have, and still are, recruited and involved in programmes that have only one end product—killing en masse. In 1939, Frederick Banting, the co-discoverer of insulin, argued his way up and down Whitehall for the research, development and use of biological weapons. Banting was an advocate for total war as was Winston Churchill. Thus his plans found willing listeners leading to work beginning on an anthrax bomb at Porton Down under the guidance of microbiologist Paul Fildes. Banting justified total war, in his writings:



Clockwise from top: the Science Museum's Making of the Modern World Gallery; the Nagasaki atom bomb; Fritz Haber; Galileo.

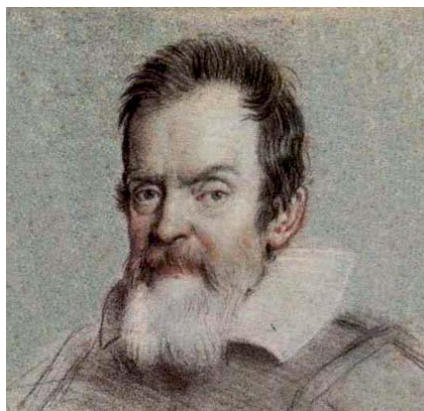
'eight to ten people working at home are now required to keep one man in the fighting line. . . so, it is just as effective to kill or disable ten unarmed workers at home as to put a soldier out of action, and if this can be done with less risk, then it would be advantageous to employ any mode of warfare to accomplish this' (ncbi.nlm.nih.gov).

Manhattan project

The discovery, in Germany, of nuclear fission in 1939 was the precursor of the Manhattan project which began in 1942. By 1944 the Project employed around 129,000 waged workers, 84,500 of whom worked in construction, 40,500 were plant operators and 1,800 were military personnel. Scientists were at the apex of this workforce. The Manhattan Project culminated in the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945. About 70,000 to 80,000 people, 30 percent of the population, were

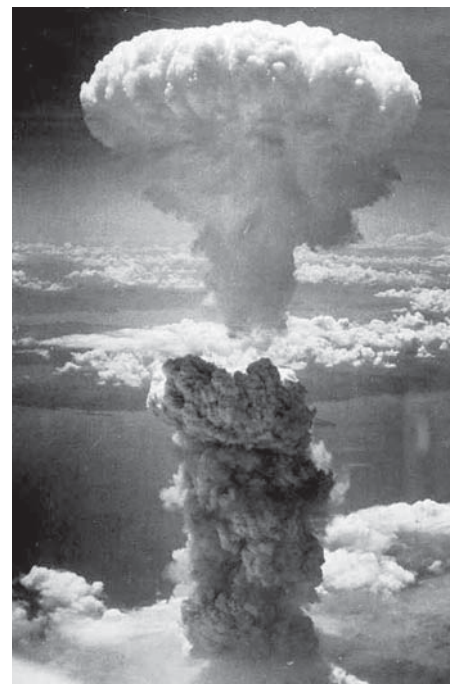
killed immediately, and another 70,000 injured. The legacy of this project is what we now live under—a nuclear stockpile estimated at 20,000 warheads.

Albert Einstein's 1905 paper on special relativity shaped the theoretical foundations for Hiroshima's bomb. Is he to blame for all of the deaths? Or are, perhaps, the 84,500 construction workers? Are Habing and Banter to blame? Or the noxious ideologies that motivated them that creates human beings who are willing to murder other human beings simply because they salute a different coloured rag? Have the protestors at the Science Museum



who caused the 'Bahraini military delegation and a number of arms dealers to be turned away' considered that the weapons peddlers and the military delegations are just a symptom of a corrosive disease? If one arms dealer is turned away ten others will fill the void. For every tyrant deposed five are evolving. It's not the weapons, their peddlers, or the buyers that are the problem—it's the system that spawns them. That system is capitalism. And all industries are governed by its priorities.

The killing business needs customers and capitalism's impetus towards war always provides



them: 'Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said he will reduce the country's 'useless' science programs to finance the production of drones and precision weapons. *'There will be no more spending of billions of people's money, taxpayers' money on useless research programs, which were used as a tool for theft'*, said a statement published on the president's website early on Wednesday. *'Today, Ukrainian production will be busy making precision weapons systems, Ukrainian drones, everything the Ukrainian army needs, starting with bullet proof vests and ending with thermographic cameras,'* he said' (rt.com).

A clock is ticking. A scientist who understood how capitalism works and what it is capable of left this timely reminder for all of us: 'I do not know with what weapons World War 3 will be fought, but World War 4 will be fought with sticks and stones' - Albert Einstein.

ANDY MATTHEWS



questionable, as is the claim that a rise in the price of alcohol is in large part responsible. But similar trends have been reported in other countries too, so it is likely that there is a real change here. This just emphasises the point that aggressive behaviour is influenced by other aspects of society.

Notice, moreover, that one can turn Wilson's argument round and claim that humans are innately peaceable, by restating his claims as follows: 'Peace has been endemic in every form of human society. There have been plenty of years when European countries have been at peace rather than fighting.'

This argument for innate peaceableness is entirely parallel to that for innate aggression, and at least as convincing.

Consider, too, your own behaviour. Some people have a shorter fuse than others, and we all get angry from time to time, but how often do you react to perceived mistreatment with physical aggression or even the threat of such action? Human society would surely be impossible, or at best very unpleasant, if people really used physical force even a large part of

the time. That simply is not how people behave.

Wilson also argues:

'Most significantly of all, the human forms of aggressive behavior are species-specific: although basically primate in form, they contain features that distinguish them from aggression in all other species.'

There is no general aggressive instinct applying to all animals, and humans are far less aggressive and violent than hyenas or lions, for instance. Wilson seems to be claiming that humans show only some of the possible aggressive responses found in the animal kingdom, hence there is something specifically human about people's aggressive behaviour, therefore it must be genetically inherited. But what is supposed to follow from this?

In fact he sees human aggression as 'a structured, predictable pattern of interaction between genes and environment'. He does not appear to believe that anyone can predict whether individuals or groups will behave aggressively in any particular situation, so all that is left is the claim that genes and environment interact to affect how we behave. Which is neither surprising nor worrying.

Wilson examines some hunter-gatherer societies, and then summarises his position:

'Human beings are strongly predisposed to respond with unreasoning hatred to external threats and to escalate their hostility sufficiently to overwhelm the source of the threat by a respectably wide margin of safety.'

The question of how violent hunter-gatherer and other tribal societies really are remains controversial (see Edward Helmore in the *Observer*, 3 February 2013) but his examples show no



Fighting Human Nature

Critics sometimes say that socialist society will not work, on the grounds that people are by nature greedy or selfish or lazy or whatever. Here we examine one writer's arguments to the effect that people are naturally aggressive.

In his book *On Human Nature*, the sociobiologist Edward Wilson asks, 'Are human beings innately aggressive?' His answer is Yes, and here is part of his reasoning:

'Throughout history, warfare, representing only the most organized technique of aggression, has been endemic to every form of society, from hunter-gatherer bands to industrial states. During the past three centuries a majority of the countries of Europe have been engaged in war during approximately half of all the years; few have ever seen a century of continuous peace.'

Let's look at Wilson's arguments, and consider some facts about human behaviour. Before going any further we should look at his definition of aggression: 'Any physical act or threat of action by one individual that reduces the freedom or genetic fitness of another'. This is odd in that it implies that only individuals, not governments, armies or companies, can commit aggression.

With regard to those who blame aggression on environmental rather than genetic factors, he writes:

'They forget that innateness refers to the measurable probability that a trait will develop in a specified set of environments, not to the certainty that the trait will develop in all environments. By this criterion human beings have a marked hereditary predisposition to aggressive behaviour.'

So in certain circumstances humans may behave aggressively. The extent of this probability is said to be measurable, presumably by such methods as counting the number of murders and other violent acts per head of the population.

It is important to appreciate that Wilson is not arguing that aggression is an inevitable part of human behaviour, since he accepts that it will not emerge always and everywhere (and that women as a group are less aggressive than men). He is well aware that it can vary greatly over time even within a single society: he cites, for instance, the Semai of Malaya, who were entirely peaceful until recruited by the British colonial authorities in the 1950s to fight against guerillas. They then became extremely bloodthirsty. And there have been recent claims that the extent of violent crime in England and Wales has fallen, with only about one half of the number of violent incidents that there were in 2002. No doubt the details of the statistics are

more than that people sometimes act aggressively and that various cultural and environmental factors determine whether they in fact do so (such as the reliability of food supplies).

In addition, we should examine to what extent Wilson's claims discredit the idea of socialism. If people really were 'predisposed' to react violently to each other, especially to strangers, then he might have a case against an egalitarian stateless society. But in socialism there will be no 'external threats' of the kind he envisages, so nothing follows about the impossibility of such a way of organising society.

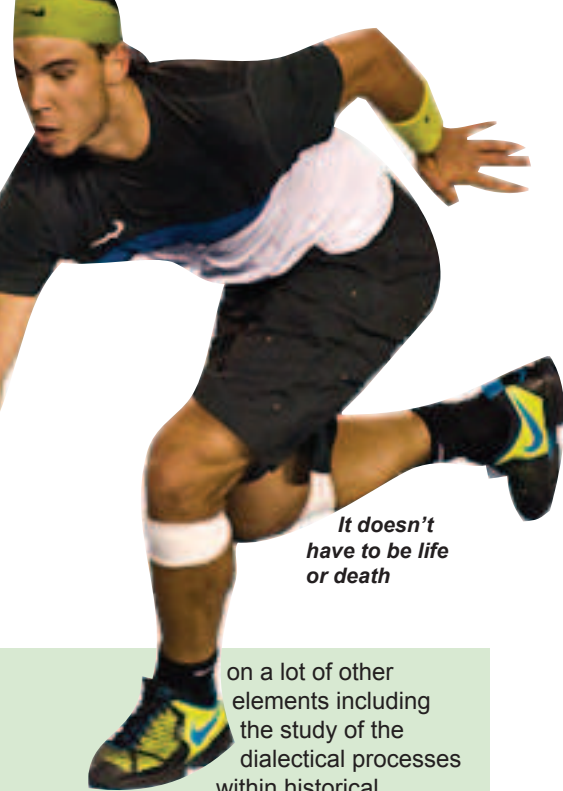
Nothing Wilson says argues against

the following claim:

'it is part of human nature to be able to become aggressive and to wage war. But how and when we become aggressive is controlled by our cultures rather than by our genes.' (Marvin Harris: *Cannibals and Kings*)

The Socialist Party's pamphlet *Are We Prisoners of Our Genes?* discusses a number of other arguments about the way human behaviour is supposedly controlled by our genetic inheritance.

PAUL BENNETT



*It doesn't
have to be life
or death*

Competition

It was, perhaps, inevitable that during my regular participation in a pub quiz, whilst exhibiting some competitive zeal fuelled by good ale, a friend would ask 'does this behaviour not represent a contradiction to your socialist principles?' My response is always: 'That's where competition belongs – in sports and games. Importing the infantile competitive ego into the adult world of economics and politics is, however, quite a different matter'. A fairly convincing, if not comprehensive, retort to this particular accusation of hypocrisy I have always thought. Upon reflection I have pondered why I still retain, at least in this minor respect, any competitive urges at all. Perhaps it's what remains of the cultural conditioning that we are all subjected to as children? Or perhaps the 'infantile ego' as I call it, does have a role to play in adult life after all – a disquieting and possibly heretical thought for a socialist!

Presumably for good evolutionary reasons children are born somewhat egocentric – they have to learn the social skills that make us such a successful species. There is no need to go into the psychological processes that transform the infant into a functioning social being but it is obvious that some achieve it more thoroughly and successfully than others. The retention of the 'infantile ego' can be due, in some part, to the conflicting values inherent in capitalist culture. At school we are told to both conform to social values through cooperating with other children and teachers etc but also to regard others as competitors on every level. This contradiction runs through the very heart of every subsequent social organisation that the individual will encounter during their lives – work, relationships, social clubs, sports clubs, etc. The one exception to this, naturally, is when you

become a member of the Socialist Party where no ego conflicts are encountered (loud sound of the clearing of throats). The immature nature of capitalism in turn causes immaturity in its citizens and all of its institutions. Part of reactionary ideology proclaims that competition breeds excellence. We have never seen much evidence that truly talented people were created by a climate of competition – rather the reverse, in that they will usually point to the support of family, friends and teachers as reasons for their success. The need to continually feed the ego by competing with others is corrosive and, ultimately, very destructive. All of this is self-evident to socialists but what about the contention that the infantile ego might have a positive role to play?

Apart from sports and games, where some element of competition may exist, what other parts of life can benefit from the naivety of the childlike emotions? Perhaps the arts are a candidate – show business is often described as infantile. Adults dressing up and playing characters on TV, the theatre and movies has a very childlike element to it. But there is a distinction between childlike and childish – the former retains naivety for the purposes of creativity and the latter illustrates behaviour motivated by immature egos (it can be observed that the two are very closely linked within the character of artistic personalities). A naïve perspective is one way of undermining cultural conditioning which is an essential component of creativity (and something we find so endearing about children). In the fine arts a naïve eye, seeing the world as if for the first time, can greatly aid a fresh and sometimes subversive perspective.

Some have said that the concept of socialism depends on the naivety of a liberated imagination that trusts in human potential. Of course it depends

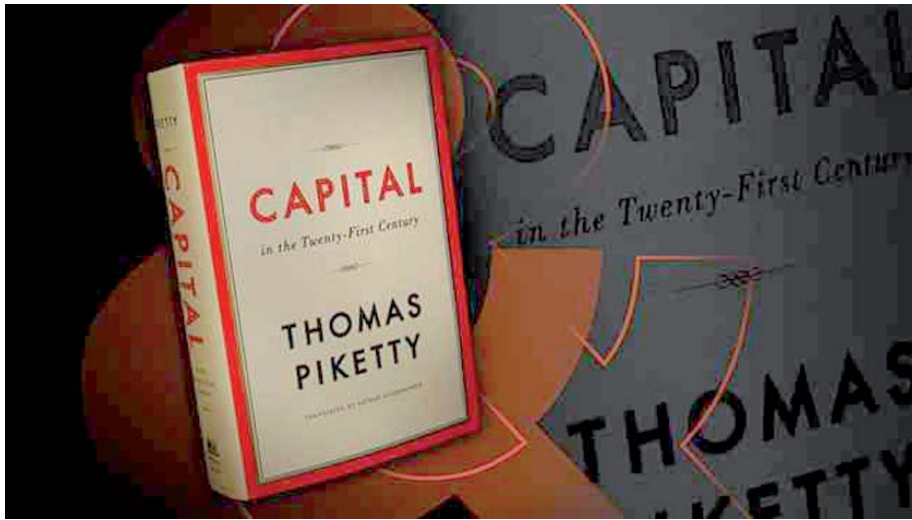
on a lot of other elements including the study of the dialectical processes within historical development but I would agree, that initially, the liberation from cultural conditioning does depend on the ability to imagine an alternative. Perhaps therein lies the secret to this paradox – capitalism has harnessed the infantile ego so that the individual feels obliged to continually compete to feel legitimised and to do so he must play by their rules – you cannot win if you do not participate in the game. He is trapped within this vicious circle which takes up all his energy and time and so never allows him to develop the concept that the game is not worth the winning and that there is no need to play it at all! Antithetically socialism is initially trying to harness the other part of 'the inner child' that has the potential to liberate the imagination and so break through the illusion of maturity that in capitalism simply means conforming to rules based on the insecurity inherent within the infantile ego – a potential synthesis of contradictory elements within the human psyche.

We have deliberately not divided the psyche into the traditional Freudian division of Ego, Id and Super Ego because, although a great deal of psychological analysis originates from this we do not want to base our observations purely on psychology. Politics is the greatest of all multi-disciplines and must include psychological dimensions as it does those of economics, history, philosophy and so on. The contention is simply that the infantile ego that brings us pleasure in games but pain in almost every other area of life is the same entity whose naivety can liberate the imagination and so be the first step in creating the world's first truly mature culture – socialism.

WEZ

Capital in the Twenty-First Century

By Thomas Piketty. Harvard University Press. 700 pages. 2014



Capitalism is based on the ownership and control of the means of wealth production by a minority. This can take various forms but, historically, the most usual – what might be called the classic form – has been through private property titles vested in individuals and enforced by the courts and the state generally. Another has been direct minority control of the state where ownership of most means of production is vested in the state, as in the old USSR.

Where ownership is through private property rights, minority ownership can be shown from the degree of concentration of property titles. This can be worked out from inheritance tax returns, wills and household surveys. The results in all countries show a very unequal distribution of wealth amongst the population.

The minority ownership of the means of wealth production is also reflected in the unequal distribution of income, due to the large non-work, property income of the top property-owners.

In this much-discussed book French economist Thomas Piketty has assembled data about the distribution of wealth and of income covering over two centuries, mainly from France, Britain and the US but also from other European countries and some in Asia and Latin America. He posits an economic law that the distribution of wealth tends to become more unequal, in that the top 10 percent come to own proportionately more, the wider is the gap between what he calls the 'rate of

return on capital' (r) and the rate of growth (g).

What is capital(ism)?

Although he sets out two 'fundamental laws of capitalism' he never actually defines what he means by the term. He does, however, define 'capital':

'In this book, capital is defined as the sum total of nonhuman assets that can be owned and exchanged on some market. Capital includes all forms of real property (including residential real estate) as well as financial and professional capital (plants, infrastructure, machinery, patents, and so on) used by firms and government agencies' (p. 46).

This is not the definition of either conventional or Marxian economics as it includes land and owner-occupied houses. So his 'rate of return on capital' is not the same as the rate of profit, which is the ratio of profit to wealth invested in production with profit in view. Piketty himself recognises this:

'... the rate of return on capital measures the yield on capital over a year regardless of its legal form (profits, rents, dividends, interest, royalties, capital gains, etc.), expressed as a percentage of the value of capital invested. It is therefore a broader concept than the 'rate of profit,' and much broader than the 'rate of interest,' while incorporating both' (p. 52).

It will in fact be less than the rate of profit, which is normally much higher than the 4-6 percent that Piketty calculates as the range of his rate of return.

There is another peculiarity about his 'rate of return on capital'. In some of his graphs he applies it to pre-capitalist times so it comes to mean any return, in whatever form, that property-owners obtain by virtue of owning property, including the labour service of feudal barons and the slave-labour of slave-owners in ancient Greece and Rome and not just the financial returns on marketable wealth as under capitalism.

This means that his claim at one point that $r > g$ is 'the fundamental structural contradiction of capitalism' (p. 572) cannot be sustained. It is not even a contradiction but would be some measure of the exploitation of the producers in all private property societies whether or not that property or its income are marketable.

He offers no explanation as to how and why there should be a 'return' on capital but simply takes its existence for granted. There is no understanding that it only arises in private property societies and amounts to a tribute extracted from the producers – under capitalism from the class of wage and salary workers – by those who monopolise the means of wealth production.

It's the same with 'growth', which he defines as the increase in a year of national income plus the increase in population. He just accepts that it happens as productivity and population increase. There is no understanding that what drives the capitalist system is the economic imperative, imposed through competition, on individuals and firms, who have invested in production, to maximise profits and accumulate them as more and more capital. Even so, his criticism of capitalism as he understands it is pretty damning.

Degrees of inequality

Chapter 10 on 'The Inequality of Capital Ownership' has tables which show that in France the top 10 percent currently own just under 60 percent of total wealth and the top 1 percent nearly 25 percent. The figures for Britain are 70 percent and 29 percent; for the US 70 percent and 32 percent; and for Sweden (said to be the least unequal country in the world) 59 percent and 20 percent.

The tables also show, as graphs,

the evolution of wealth-owning inequality for the two hundred years from 1810 to 2010. The highest degree of inequality was reached in 1910 when the top 10 percent in France owned 89 percent and the top 1 percent 60 percent; in Britain it was 90 percent and 70 percent and in Sweden 90 percent and 60 percent. At that time the US was less unequal than Europe with 80 percent and 45 percent.

The tables confirm the socialist contention that the basis of present-day society is the ownership of the means of wealth production by a minority. But they also show that the degree of inequality has gone down as well as up during this two-hundred year period. This requires an explanation. Piketty offers two.

The first is a long-run secular trend which he calls 'the emergence of the patrimonial middle class' by which he means that the share in total wealth of the middle 40 percent – those in between the top 10 percent and the bottom 50 percent – has increased since 1910. This statistical category has come to acquire enough wealth to own, together, between a quarter and a third of total wealth. This has had the statistical result of reducing the *share* of the top 10 percent but has not affected or reduced or been at the expense of the *amount* of wealth of the top group, whose wealth has continued to grow in absolute terms.

It should be noted (though Piketty doesn't) that a large amount of the wealth of the middle 40 percent takes the form of the houses they live in and which have been paid for but which are not capital in the sense of an asset that brings in an income. This means that the figures in the tables underestimate the degree of concentration of the amount of assets that do bring in an actual property income.

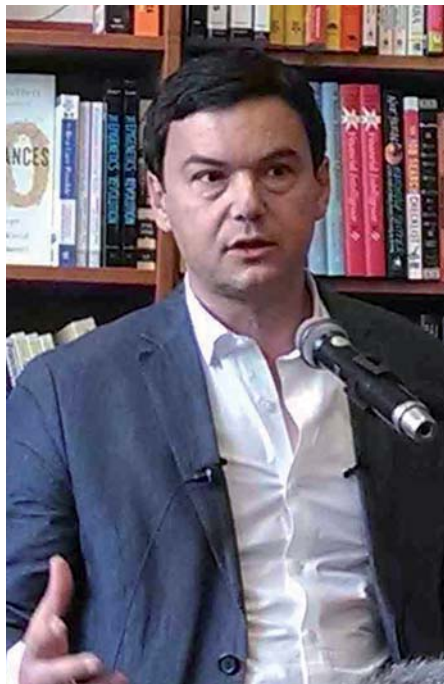
Piketty notes that this shift has not affected the share of 'the poorest half of the population, whose share of total wealth has always been miniscule (generally around 5 percent), even in Sweden (where it has never been more than 10 percent)' (p. 347).

The exception not the rule

The second explanation that Piketty offers as to why the share of the top 10 percent fell in the period 1920-1970 develops his theory that the wider the gap between *r* and *g* the stronger the trend towards greater inequality. His explanation is that during this period the rate of return was reduced by the destruction of wealth during the two world wars of

the period and by the devaluation through inflation of capital invested in government bonds. At the same time the rate of growth increased due to reconstruction work. The result was a reduction in inequality beyond that caused by the rise in the share of the middle 40 percent.

This explanation makes this period, when the rate of return, the share of income from capital in national income and the share of the top 10 percent in national wealth, all fell – in



Thomas Piketty

other words, when the richest were squeezed a little, though hardly till the pips squeaked – an exception to the normal working of capitalism.

The normal or 'natural' tendency as he calls it, for Piketty, is for the rich to get proportionately richer. In fact he argues that the degree of inequality will tend to increase in the course of the 21st century on the grounds that growth is likely to be slower while the rate of return can be expected to remain the same, so that the gap between the two will widen. He sees this as a danger to democracy and the welfare state (which he calls 'the social state'). As an old-fashioned Social Democrat reformist (he is a supporter of the French 'Socialist' Party) he wants to stop and reverse this trend and probably wrote the book to drum up support for measures aimed at achieving this.

The trouble, from his point of view, is that his theory, if valid, provides a powerful argument against the chances of this reformist campaign succeeding. It means that the reformists in this field have set themselves the task not simply of

reducing inequality in the ownership of wealth but also of overcoming economic forces working in the opposite direction.

That legal private property capitalism has a tendency for the rich to become richer in *absolute* terms is a consequence of the accumulation of capital (in the sense of wealth used to produce more wealth with a view to profit). Where there are private property rights over means of production the income these 'yield' when used as capital goes to the owners and the part that is re-invested (accumulated) is added to their wealth, ie, they become richer. This is a tendency the reformists will have working against them, whether or not Piketty is right about there also being a tendency too for the rich to get richer *relative* to the rest of the population.

The measures he proposes in Part Four to stop the rich getting richer are incredibly weak – higher taxes on high incomes (on the 'supersalaries' of the 'supermanagers' as well as the investment income of the rich) and a wealth tax. He recognises that no one country is likely to adopt this for fear, in the context of globalised capitalism, of putting off outside investment and so proposes a 'global wealth tax'. Which is even more unlikely.

In any event, it is not a less unequal distribution of wealth and income that will help solve the problems that the class of wage and salary earners and their dependants face under capitalism. It is for the minority who monopolise the means of wealth production to be expropriated and for these to become the held in common so that they can be used to turn out what people need instead of things for sale with a view to a profit for their owners as at present.

ADAM BUICK

Socialist Party Head Office

52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN

3.00pm, Sunday 19 October 'Have You Read Piketty?' Speaker: Adam Buick.



OBITUARY

ANDY COX

It is with great sadness that I announce the death of my twin brother, Andy, my lifelong and closest buddy, who succumbed to a massive and totally unexpected heart attack on 8 June. He was at the very prime of his life and, after a long period of huge personal distress, when things finally seemed to be looking up for him and his new partner, Kim, he was taken from us. All who knew him will recognise in him one of the nicest and warmest of human beings one could meet whose generosity of spirit, genuine humanity and concern for others could not be doubted.

Andy was a revolutionary socialist before I was and, in fact, was instrumental in me encountering the SPGB. He lived in Clapham in London for a short while in the early 1970s, not far from the SPGB Head Office. It was in his little bedsit that I saw my first copy of the *Socialist Standard*. Our early years together, first at a catholic boarding school in Pretoria and then serving in the South African army as conscripts (we both narrowly escaped being sent to Angola at that time, to fight the MPLA and the Cubans by dint of joining the regimental bugle band in Walvis Bay, Namibia) provided fertile soil in which our subsequent radicalisation took root. Apartheid South Africa in 1972 was a seething hotbed of liberal student protest. That was when Andy was first arrested and questioned by the police for distributing subversive literature; I was a little more fortunate in escaping the long arm of the law. Our long hair and bell bottoms were probably grounds enough for suspicion.

When the family emigrated to the UK that year, our political evolution continued - in my case from Heathite Tory, to green activist, to left wing zealot and, finally, revolutionary socialist. Andy beat me to that final place of ideological repose even if I joined the SPGB before him. He was less of an activist than I was but in no way was he less a revolutionary socialist. People sometimes conflate Party activism with commitment to the socialist cause. That is a mistake, I think. Andy was not much of a Party activist though in recent years, after I emigrated to Spain, he joined the South West regional branch and started attending branch meetings. However, his commitment to the cause was never in doubt. There is a long tradition of a kind of DIY approach to promoting socialism, both inside and outside the Party, and Andy was no exception in that respect.

This is no better exemplified than in the case of the website he set up called "A Point of View (<http://andycox1953.webs.com/>)" which contains a number of his articles. These reveal his fine flair as a wordsmith and his ability to marshal empirical facts and ruthless logic, much as a gifted military strategist would deploy detachments of military units to confound the enemy. Andy had been helping me with a long term (and long overdue) project - writing a hefty tome on the subject of "socialist values" - and I shall sorely miss his wise counsel and sure-footed insights.

But, above all, I shall miss him and the person he was, as will so many who had the pleasure and the privilege of having known him. He was a truly remarkable man and a wonderful human being.

ROBIN COX

"I've been teaching for 30 years, and I find this to be one of the best short films I have ever used" **DOUG BROWN, PROFESSOR OF ECONOMICS, NORTH ARIZONA UNIVERSITY**

Capitalism and Other Kids' Stuff is a short film from The Socialist Party which questions some of the most basic assumptions about life in capitalism.

For a copy, complete the order form on page 7



By whose labour alone

WHEN THE economic statistics for the April-June quarter were announced in August, commentators noticed an apparent anomaly. While unemployment had fallen so had wages:

'Figures from the Office for National Statistics show that the jobless total for the last quarter have fallen by 132,000 to 2.08 million. However wage growth suffered a collapse between April and June with average weekly earnings dropping by 0.2 per cent, the first fall in five years' (*Daily Telegraph*, 13 August).

Normally the fewer the number of unemployed the stronger (or, rather, the less weak) is the workers' bargaining position over the price of the ability to work they sell to an employer for a wage or a salary. So, you wouldn't expect wages to fall if unemployment is falling; maybe to remain stagnant but not to actually fall. Various explanations for this were put forward. Some, including the Office for National Statistics itself, said it was a one-off due to special circumstances in this particular quarter. Others offered a different explanation, as did the *Independent* (5 August) commenting on an earlier report by the think-tank the National Institute for Economic and Social Research:

'NIESR also stresses that the labour productivity performance, which measures output per hour worked, has been 'abysmal'. It does not expect Britain's pre-crisis productivity levels to be re-attained until 2017, reinforcing fears of a lost economic decade. Productivity is even more significant than GDP per capita because without growth employers can't increase wages.'

It is not true that 'without growth employers can't increase wages'. They can, but it would mean a reduction in their current level of profits, which workers can sometimes impose in specially favourable circumstances. What is true is that growth brought about by an increase in productivity means that employers can (not the same as will) increase wages without this meaning reducing their current level of profits. They may not make as much as they would without the wage increase but they will still make more than they were.

There is a revealing hidden assumption behind the argument that without growth 'employers can't increase wages.' It's that profits as well as wages come out of what workers produce. Productivity, as output (measured by the price at which it is sold) per hour of work, is a measure of how much an average worker produces in an hour.

No matter how much the economic textbooks try to get away from it, and in spite of the ridiculous claim by self-styled 'entrepreneurs' to be 'wealth creators', it remains a fact that the only way that wealth can be created is by human beings applying their mental and physical energies to materials that originally came from nature. Labour productivity determines the size of the cake that profits are going to take a share of. Which is why it is such a key economic indicator for capitalism.

Adam Smith recognised long before Marx that profits come out of what those who work produce:

'As soon as stock has accumulated in the hands of particular persons, some of them will naturally employ it in setting to work industrious people, whom they will supply with materials and subsistence, in order to make a profit by the sale of their work, or by what their labour adds to the value of their materials' (*The Wealth of Nations*, chapter VI).

Adam Smith clearly had a better understanding of how capitalism works than the so-called Adam Smith Institute.



In the Jungle of the Cities by Bertolt Brecht

WHILE BRECHT'S *Arturo Ui* was in London's West End, the Arcola Theatre in Dalston in East London produced Brecht's early play *Im Dickicht der Städte* (*In the Jungle of the Cities*) directed by Peter Sturm. *Im Dickicht* is a bewildering and bizarre play. After its May 1923 premiere in Munich it became notorious for its impenetrability, was seen as incomprehensible so it was deemed to be Jewish or Bolshevik or 'Modern' or all three. In a Munich which was a hotbed of Nazism in the pre-Beer Hall putsch days, performances of the play were disrupted several times by the Nazis. Its first English language production would be in New York City in 1960 by Judith Malina and the Living Theatre.

Brecht's play is set in a mythical Chicago in the years 1912-15, although the mythologised wilderness of the modern city he called Chicago could also be Berlin, what he called 'some bleak anywhere', a city which had 'become wild, dark, mysterious.' The play portrays the brutality of urban capitalism, the city in the grip of rampant capitalism and 'the big city as a jungle... the enmity of the metropolis, its malignant stony consistency, its Babylonian confusion of languages.' Brecht was inspired by the popular Danish gangster novel *Hjulet* (The Wheel) by JV Jensen, Rimbaud's poem cycle *A Season in Hell*, Schiller's play *The Robbers*, and the Upton Sinclair novel *The Jungle* which 'set forth the breaking of human hearts by a system which exploits the labor of men and women for profit.'

Im Dickicht is the story of a savage battle between two men; Schlink, a Malay lumber dealer played by Jeffrey Kissoon, and George Garga, a book clerk in a lending library played by Joseph Arkley. Brecht wrote that poet Rimbaud was a model for the character of George Garga 'a German translation from the French into the American.' This struggle is at times an abstract wrestling match which can be seen as the class struggle in metaphorical terms. The relationship between Schlink and Garga is sado-masochistic at times, has elements of homosexuality which evokes the power struggle and relationship between the poets Rimbaud and Verlaine.

Im Dickicht could be the struggle against the pressing reality of the modern city, the human isolation and atomisation of individuals in capitalism where in crowded cities people are essentially alone. Schlink says 'If you cram a ship full to bursting with human bodies, they'll all freeze with loneliness.' In this early play Brecht does not demonstrate his mature Marxist aesthetic with its clear political messages.

Kill Your Darlings by Austin Bunn

Director John Krokidas and writer Austin Bunn's 2013 film *Kill Your Darlings* draws on Jack Kerouac's novel *Vanity of Duluoz*, portraying the early years (1943-44) of the 'Beat Generation' in New York City of Allen Ginsberg (Daniel Radcliffe), William Burroughs (Ben Foster), Jack Kerouac (Jack Huston) and Lucien Carr (Dane DeHaan).

We meet Allen Ginsberg at home in New Jersey with his poet father Louis and his mother Naomi. Louis was a socialist, his parents had been active in the Yiddish Arbeiter Circle, and he went with his father to lectures by Eugene Debs, IWW founder and Socialist Party of America Presidential candidate. Louis named his first son after Debs: 'He was magnificent. All the ironies of the capitalist system came blazing forth. He was a brilliant man.' Allen's mother was a member of the Communist Party.

Allen goes to Columbia University studying to be a Labor Lawyer, meets Lucien Carr ('blond, eighteen, of fantastic male beauty' (*Vanity of Duluoz*), William Burroughs (Harvard educated St Louis patrician), and Jack Kerouac, 'the stocky Breton with blue eyes and coal black hair' (Gerald Nicosia, 1983), football player, poet, Merchant Marine, and originator of 'First Thought Best Thought.' Jack and Lucien liked to sing together folk songs, Leadbelly's country blues, Communist work songs, and with Ginsberg and Burroughs 'they would have Dostoyevskian confrontations, endure horrors out of Kafka' (Nicosia). Their artistic endeavours are inspired by Yeats, Whitman, Rimbaud, Baudelaire, the pleasures and wild sensations of marijuana, alcohol, Benzadrine and the Bebop Jazz music revolution of Charlie Parker (Bird).

Kerouac was a 'Canuck', a French-Canadian from the textile manufacturing mill-town of Lowell in Massachusetts, 13 miles north of Thoreau's

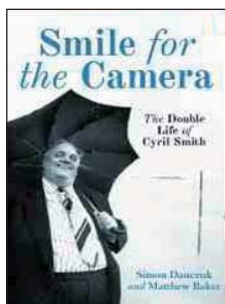
Walden Pond. Ann Charters described Lowell as 'poor, dirty and rundown, both working-class and obstinately bourgeois, belligerently provincial.' In the 1920s and 1930s Lowell entered economic decline when companies relocated to the South where labour was cheaper, and in 1931 *Harpers Magazine* called it a 'depressed industrial desert.'

Kerouac's first language was 'joul' the French of the 'Canucks', a dialect of working-class Quebec French, and he would overcome the handicaps of his working-class 'Canuck' origins to become the greatest writer since James Joyce, 'not even 72 hours a week of underpaid mill work could keep these people in their place' wrote Nicosia. Ginsberg overcame being a 'spindly Jewish kid with horn-rimmed glasses' (*Vanity of Duluoz*) to become the poetical heir to William Blake, a 1960s Counter-Cultural guru and New Left icon. As Dave Kammerer says in the film 'under the right circumstances he might change the world.'

STEVE CLAYTON



***Smile for the Camera, A Double Life of Cyril Smith* by Simon Danczuk and Matthew Baker.**



This book tells the career of Smith, who was the face of the Liberal Party in the 70s and 80s, and their star performer. The book shows the rise of

Smith from an illegitimate child, in the 30s, through membership of the Young Liberals, to Liberal agent, then as a Labour councillor and alderman, to Mayor of Rochdale, when after an argument over rent rises, he resigned from the Labour Party to form his own party which predictably went nowhere. In 1968 he re-joined the Liberal Party, displacing the prospective candidate for the 1970 General Election, which he lost. In 1972 the Labour MP for Rochdale died. Smith won the resulting by-election.

During Smith's time on Rochdale Council he had built up a coterie of various contacts, and had a deserved reputation as a hardworking councillor and a Mr Fixit. Smith was friendly with a leader of the Pakistani community, Karim Dad, who was the Godfather-like Mr Big in the community. Virtually the whole Pakistani community backed Smith, who was elected MP. Karim Dad was arrested the following year for personation (electoral fraud) and fled the country before his trial. Smith continued to rise in the Liberal Party, playing the part of the bluff, plain speaking Northerner. Behind the façade, however, was a darker side, that of a predatory child molester.

In the early 60s, Smith was the backer of Cambridge House, a home for young men 11-18 year-olds, providing cheap lodging. I now write from personal knowledge. I first met Cyril Smith in 1958 when, at the age of 16, I joined the Labour Party Youth Section. I then resigned from the Labour Party in 1960, after attending the 1960 conference in Scarborough, joining the Young Communist League.

I trained as an SRN, and in 1963 while selling the magazine *Challenge*, I was approached by a couple of lads from Cambridge House, who told me how Smith had both physically and sexually assaulted them.

They told me how Smith had spanked their bare backsides, fondled their testicles, pulled back their foreskins, for hygienic examinations. I got the lads to make

sworn, notarised statements, which I personally presented to Rochdale Chief Constable, Ross. Ross I'm sure dismissed it as a Commie plot to discredit Smith. Copies, however, were given to the Labour Agent Josh Hughes, which is probably why funding was withdrawn from Cambridge House.

I left Rochdale in 1974, not returning until the late 80s, by which time Smith's career had bloomed, and the list of his sex crimes increased.

In many ways, Smith was a superb politician, building networks of protectors, and fellow offenders, giving protection to each other. The Rochdale grooming scandal of the enforced prostitution of dozens of young girls, though, brought everything to a head.

The book also charts Smith's involvement in the cover-up of the dangers of asbestos, becoming a paid lobbyist for Turner Newall (the world's largest asbestos producer). I must confess to a personal interest. My late wife died in 2004 from asbestosis. The site of Turner's is now a derelict ruin, on a highly contaminated site, and for years there has been a campaign for the safe development and remedial control of the area.

Ultimately, the book shows how the system of capitalism corrupts and destroys both life and human relationships.

ROGER CHADWICK

Letters continued

leftist policies. An early, and quite possibly the greatest, example of betrayal of the working class by leftist leaders needs to be emphasised because without this historical reference the rise of such monsters as Tony Blair would be inexplicable. The fact is that if 100 years ago the German members of the Second International had refused to allow the finance of the war it could not have began. I fully appreciate that the underlying economic tensions made some kind of major international conflict probable but this can never excuse the actions of the reformists that helped make the war inevitable.

ANDREW WESTLEY, Cambridge

Reply: This might be a matter of emphasis and interpretation, but we certainly agree that the pro-war vote of the German Social Democrats was a betrayal of working-class interests, and a milestone in the tragic journey towards out-and-out reformism within European Social Democracy.

-- Editors

Squeamish

Dear Editors

I'd like to add a short comment to the article on Field Marshal Sir Douglas 'Butcher' Haig in the August *Socialist Standard*.

In *To End All Wars*, Adam Hochschild cites a statement by Haig's son that his father did not visit casualty stations 'because these visits made him physically ill'. I had not realised he was quite so sensitive, but no doubt this squeamishness helped him to demand high casualty rates.

PAUL BENNETT, Manchester

Decline

Dear Editors

I am writing with a query about an item in 'Voice from the Back' in your July issue. In the paragraph headed 'the Decline of Religion' you conclude that 'religion has always been a barrier to socialism; so no tears here on learning churches are closing'. I understand the decline in organised religion is largely confined to 'the West'. Does your comment imply that people here are now more open to receiving the ideas of socialism? Is this your experience; and, if not, why not.

ANDREW DURRANT, NORWICH

Reply: There are many barriers to workers understanding and supporting socialism. Here are just a few. Some believe there is a God and an after-life, so this present existence is of little importance. Some believe that patriotism is of prime importance and we should be concerned about 'our' country rather than a world-wide solution. Others think that it is 'human nature' to be greedy and acquisitive, so socialism is impossible. All of these barriers to understanding the case for world-wide socialism have to be overcome before we can get socialism. Probably greater than all these barriers is the lack of imagination that can foresee a future society based on co-operation and harmony rather than capitalism with its wars, poverty, starvation, racialism and crime. All we were saying in our article was that the diminishing power of religion is a step forward in the eventual attaining of a new socialist society. --Editors

SOCIALIST STANDARD INDEX FOR 2013

For a copy send 2 second-class stamps to: The Socialist Party, 52 Clapham High St, London SW4 7UN

Socialist Party statement on the Marx copyright controversy

THIS SPRING, London-based publishers Lawrence & Wishart came under fire online and in the leftist press for allegedly trying to 'privatise' the works of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. By now over six thousand activists have signed online petitions demanding that the 'nasty, capitalistic' publishers retract their claim of a copyright 'monopoly' over the duo's collected writings. The allegations make for compelling headlines, but in reality the issue isn't so clear cut.

The works of Marx and Engels are valuable because they systematically document and explain the basic economic processes underpinning class societies. And an understanding of these processes is vital for identifying the problems with our own class society—capitalism—and what needs to be done to rectify them. Of course, countless later writers have helpfully summarised, elucidated, corrected, and interpreted Marx and Engels's works, though many of the original writings remain relevant and worthy of study today.

Both men having died in the 19th century, the copyrights on their original publications have long since expired. They are now in the public domain, meaning that, as far as the law is concerned, anyone is free to copy and distribute them. However, this status applies only to the works *as they were originally published*, unannotated and (usually) in German. Under copyright law, whenever someone produces a new version of a public-domain work

that extends or transforms it in an intellectually creative way, such as through editing, critical commentary, or translation into another language, a new copyright is manifested in the novel creative elements. British law fixes the term of copyright at 70 years following the death of the creator, so any translations and critical editions produced since 1944 are likely to be proprietary in the UK.

The recent furore over Lawrence & Wishart began when they demanded that the Marxists Internet Archive, a free online library, stop distributing material from a particular modern collection with the title *Marx/Engels Collected Works*. This collection is a 50-volume scholarly edition and English translation which Lawrence & Wishart had commissioned themselves (in collaboration with two other publishers) between 1975 and 2005. Though as a matter of law the publishers have the right to restrict republication of their own particular edition, their detractors have misunderstood this to mean that Lawrence & Wishart were asserting complete economic control over all of Marx and Engels's works generally. In reality, the original German texts upon which the *Collected Works* is based, as well as many earlier English translations and editions of these same texts, remain in the public domain.

Certainly the Socialist Party would welcome a move by Lawrence & Wishart to release their *Collected Works* into the public domain, or under terms which would permit the

Marxists Internet Archive to resume distributing it. But at the same time it is understandable why they have so far opted not to do this. Like any other private enterprise marketing a product, their very existence is predicated on their exclusive control of the fruits of their employees' labour. It is illogical to attack a single commercial publisher for engaging in business practices which are, by economic necessity, no different from those of every other one.

What we can do, and indeed what we have always done, is to roundly condemn the entire socio-economic system which has led to the repugnant concept of 'intellectual property'. Not long ago the notion that anyone ought to be able to claim exclusive rights to the expression of an idea would have been considered absurd. Today, however, legislative and technological measures have enabled and entrenched the commodification of humanity's intellectual output. While computers and the Internet have long since made it feasible to freely share the totality of the world's knowledge, the realisation of this has been thwarted at every turn by those whose business models require that information, like physical commodities, remain scarce. In the digital world, of course, information is never scarce—entire libraries can be duplicated a thousand times over with the click of a button. Rather than face up to this fact, publishers have collectively erected artificial legal and technical barriers to the



Porn and Real Life

FOR SOME reason, porn films don't tend to get reviewed or discussed on the telly very often. This gap in the market was recently filled by *The Golden Rules of Porn* (More 4), a pornucopia of x-rated movies. In this show, Grace Dent

and some talking head porn stars, comedians and viewers, give a knowing, tongue in cheek guide to pornos from the last forty years. The clips sourced from VHS tapes are so grainy that the editors at More 4 hardly needed to fuzz the genitalia out.

100 seminal porn films were surveyed, from *Flesh Gordon* to *I'm Not Feeling Myself Tonight*. Not-so vital statistics were gleaned from the films' 573 sex scenes, including how many featured steamy shower scenarios (5 percent), whips (8 percent) and men with moustaches (more than half). 42.23 percent of chat-up lines involved puns and innuendos, although in real life an opening gambit based on fixing plumbing isn't likely to have the same outcome as in a skin flick. And few people meet and 'get it on' as quickly as

the 72 seconds of the average porno pair-up.

The programme highlights the gulf between porn and reality, but there's also a gulf between how the programme describes porn and porn in real life. Porn is presented as something kitsch, made by enthusiastically happy stars whose sexploits have afforded them luxury pads with their own swimming pools. The other side of porn – how it exploits and cheapens those pushed into it – isn't mentioned. Some statistics not cited by the show are that 37 percent of women in porn films were child victims of forced sex, 33 percent met the criteria for depression, 50 percent had lived in poverty within the last year (California Women's Health Survey) and 88 percent of porn films feature physical aggression (US Department of Justice report, 2004). The long-term impact of pornography on its consumers was also ignored by the programme. The average age at which Americans first watch hardcore porn is 11 (internetsafety101.org), and this can lead to distorted views on self-esteem and relationships. The role which pornography has in society should be discussed more often, but not as trashy clip shows like *The Golden Rules of Porn*.

MIKE FOSTER

distribution of knowledge. Here, as elsewhere in capitalism, technological progress and social utility take a back seat to the preservation of profits.

The fundamental problem with the removal of *Marx/Engels Collected Works* from the internet, then, lies not with Lawrence & Wishart's demand, nor with the bourgeois copyright regime which gave it legal force. Rather, it is with the capitalist mode of production in general, in which nothing—not even scholarly editions of socialist texts—is produced unless it can be sold at a profit. Capitalist businesses which are not willing to take such legally sanctioned but antisocial steps as are required to preserve their profits are doomed to fail, only to be supplanted by competitors with no such qualms. We therefore call on working people everywhere to unite for a single political solution: the abolition of the global capitalist system and its replacement with one based on common ownership and production for use instead of for profit.

Picture Credits

Cover: Frank Dobson - camdenlabour.org.uk

p9: Sir Keir Starmer Chatham House 2013 Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic licence.

p13: Making of the Modern World Gallery - © Geni 2012 Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported licence.

p16: *Capital in the Twenty-First Century* - www.impactinvestor.co.uk.

p17: Thomas Piketty - © 2014 Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 3.0 Unported licence.

p20: *Smile for the Camera* – amazon.co.uk

p23: 1964 *Socialist Standard* - www.worldsocialism.org.

Meetings

For full details of all our meetings and events see our [Meetup](http://www.meetup.com/The-Socialist-Party-of-Great-Britain/) site:
<http://www.meetup.com/The-Socialist-Party-of-Great-Britain/>

Manchester Branch

Literature stall at Wigan Diggers Festival, The Wiend, Wigan, WN1 1PF.
From 11.00am Saturday 13 September.

Kent & Sussex Regional Branch

Literature stall in the Parade, Canterbury (9 minutes walk from Canterbury East railway station and 12 minutes walk from Canterbury West railway station) from 12.00 Noon Saturday 13 September.

Socialist Party Head Office

52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN.
3.00pm, Sunday 14 September:
'The Strange Death of Labour Ireland 1912-22'
Guest Speaker: Dr Ivan Gibbons.

Glasgow Branch

Maryhill Community Central Halls, 304 Maryhill Road, Glasgow G20 7YE. 8.30pm, Wednesday 17 September 2014 'Hollywood: Behind the Dream Factory' Speaker: Vic Vanni.

West London Branch

Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace, London W4 4JN. 8.00pm Tuesday 16th September: 'The Scottish Referendum: A red herring' Speaker: Adam Buick.

East Anglia Regional Branch

The Reindeer Pub, 10 Dereham Road, Norwich NR2 4AY. 2.00pm, Saturday 20 September: 'Highland Clearances'. Speaker: Alwyn Edgar.

Yorkshire Regional Branch meeting

The Victoria Hotel, 28 Great George Street, Leeds LS1 3DL (behind Leeds art gallery and ten minutes walk from Leeds railway station) 2.00pm, Saturday 27 September.

Manchester Branch

Unicorn, Church Street, Manchester M4 1PW 2.00pm Saturday 11 October. 'World War One: No Working Class Interests at Stake'

Glasgow Branch

Maryhill Community Central Halls, 304 Maryhill Road, Glasgow G20 7YE. 8.30pm, Wednesday 15 October. 'Karl Marx in the 21st Century'

Socialist Party Head Office

52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN 3.00pm, Sunday 19 October 'Have You Read Piketty?' Speaker: Adam Buick.

West London Branch

Chiswick Town Hall, Heathfield Terrace, London W4 4JN. 8.00pm Tuesday 21 October 'War without End' Speaker: Steve Clayton.

Oxford Communist Corresponding Society

The Mitre pub, 17 High Street (corner of Turl Street), Oxford OX1 4AG. 7.30pm Thursday 23 October. 'I for one welcome our robot overlords'. Socialist Party speaker: Bill Martin

Socialist Party Head Office

52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN Autumn Delegate Meeting. 10.30 am to 5.00pm Saturday 25 and Sunday 26 October

Other events

Party leafletting of TUC 'Britain needs a pay rise' march 'Saturday 18 October - assemble 11.00am at Blackfriars Embankment for march to Hyde Park

Party literature stall outside the Anarchist Fair Saturday 18 October between 10.00am and 7.00pm. Queen Mary College, University of London, Mile End Road, London, E1 4NS.

Socialist Party Day School

What We Say about capitalism, war and religion.

Capitalism: 'a counting house on the top of a cinder-heap'

Speaker: Pat Deutz

Why Wars Happen

Speaker: Howard Moss

'The illusory happiness of the people' - Socialism and Religion'

Speaker: Steve Clayton

Socialist Party Head Office

52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN. **11.00am to 5.00pm, Saturday 27 September 2014**

Declaration of Principles

This declaration is the basis of our organisation and, because it is also an important historical document dating from the formation of the party in 1904, its original language has been retained.

Object

The establishment of a system of society based upon the common ownership and democratic control of the means and instruments for producing and distributing wealth by and in the interest of the whole community.

Declaration of Principles

The Socialist Party of Great Britain holds

1. That society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e. land, factories, railways, etc.) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.

2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as

a class struggle between those who possess but do not produce and those who produce but do not possess.

3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.

4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind, without distinction of race or sex.

5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.

6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organize consciously and politically for the conquest

of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. The Socialist Party of Great Britain, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

50 Years Ago

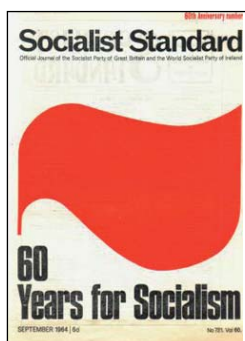
Retrospect

IN THIS special issue we commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the publication of the first *Socialist Standard*.

In all that time it has never missed an issue. Through the vicissitudes of two world wars, when we often wondered whether we would be able to carry on at all, to economic slump when we were able to continue publication only through the goodwill of our printers, who carried us in debt for years, the *Socialist Standard* has carried on.

Now, we look back on those years, sixty years which have seen so many changes and many terrible events.

Opposite this page we publish the front cover of the first *Socialist Standard*.



It takes us back into another world, September, 1904—when the motor-car was still a dangerous novelty; when Orville Wright had only a few months before flown the first aeroplane, for just 12 seconds.

Fleming had recently invented the thermionic valve, but radio was still in the distant future; and Rutherford had just begun his researches into the structure of the atom which were to result, forty years later, in the annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

War in those days was something associated with petty campaigns to subdue the native populations of Africa and Asia, although the Boer War had given a foretaste of more serious things to come. The Entente Cordiale between Britain and France had been signed a year earlier as a defence against German capitalism, a grimmer warning of the holocaust in the future. And the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War a few months earlier presaged both the rise of Japanese capitalism and the Russian Revolution of 1917.

In the world of politics there was a lot of talk about Socialism, but it was really reformism that was making the running. The formation of the Labour Party had still to wait two years, but parties like the Social Democratic Federation, the Fabians, and the I.L.P., were already busily paving the way for it. The German Social Democratic Party enjoyed the support of millions and there were similar and strong parties in France, Austria, Italy, and other countries, all claiming to be Socialist.

(from editorial, *Socialist Standard*, September 1964)

ACTION REPLAY

Games, Shops and Springboards

THEY'RE CALLED The Friendly Games but they have plenty of rivalry, flag-waving and drug-taking, just like any big international sports gathering. The Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, which finished early last month, have been hailed as a major success for the city, for Scotland, and for the Commonwealth.

And of course it's not just, or not even mainly, about sport. The buzz word is 'legacy' (see legacy2014.co.uk). VisitScotland, the national tourist organisation, emphasised that the Games would be a boost to tourism in both the host city and the whole country. Tourism is apparently worth £11bn a year to the Scottish economy, but there is hope that that can be increased, with the Games acting as a springboard (in a sporting metaphor, of course) for yet more visitors. £560m has been spent on the Games, with this seen as investment for the future.

On the negative side, Atos, notorious for implementing in a particularly harsh way some of the government's austerity measures, was chosen as one of the

Gamespartners, which many Glaswegians saw as adding insult to injury. Parking restrictions were suddenly introduced in places, as a further instance of the Games having priority over local residents. Parts of the city have been prettified (street cleaning, planting flowers, etc) but this has been confined to certain spots, such as those on the marathon course.

One of the most deprived areas of Glasgow is the East End, where many of the Games events were held. New houses and hotels were constructed in place of existing buildings, but one resident complained that the result was that there were 'nae fucking shops' (*Guardian*, 2 August). A day centre for adults with learning difficulties was demolished to be replaced by a car park; the council said this was to provide 'a more efficient service' (the standard justification for practically every cut or restructuring).

The real test, no doubt, will be to see if the Games, and the Scottish team's performance, has any effect on voting in the 'independence' referendum. Nicola Sturgeon, head of the Yes campaign, pointed out that Scotland had won a record number of medals, as if this would somehow influence people's voting intentions. Still, it's probably as relevant to workers as arcane arguments about the retention of the pound.

PB

FREE

3-month trial subscription to the *Socialist Standard*



For more details about The Socialist Party, or to request a 3-month trial subscription to the *Socialist Standard*, please complete and return this form to **52 Clapham High Street, London SW4 7UN**.

☐ Please send me an info pack

☐ Please send me a trial subscription to the *Socialist Standard*.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

.....

.....

Postcode.....



Voice from the Back

Seeing Stars

The working class are brought up to believe in leadership and encouraged to imagine that in a complicated society like capitalism it is best to leave decisions to the intellectually superior minds of politicians and statesmen. The madness of that notion was well illustrated by a recent news item. 'The sick should turn to astrology for answers, a Tory MP has declared. David Tredinnick said astrology had a proven track at helping people recover from illness and should be incorporated into standard medical treatments. The MP for Bosworth in Leicestershire also admitted he had prepared astrological charts for fellow MPs - but refused to say who' (*Daily Mail*, 26 July). Tredinnick is a member of two influential Commons committees, the health and science and technology committees, but it would be interesting to know if he suffers from some ill-health in the future whether he will consult a hospital or just look up his astrology chart.

Democracy Inc.

The United States of America never tires of telling the rest of the world what a perfect example of democracy the USA is, but the influence of corporate big business exposes that claim as nonsense. An explosion of spending on political advertising on television - set to break \$2 billion in congressional races, with overall spots up nearly 70 per cent since the 2010 midterm election - is accelerating the rise of moneyed interests and wresting control from the candidates' own efforts to reach voters. 'The top three outside groups alone - Americans for Prosperity, Senate Majority PAC, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce - have already spent a combined more than \$80 million in congressional races. Americans for Prosperity, backed by the conservative billionaire brothers Charles and David Koch, has spent \$44 million on House and Senate races. Senate Majority

PAC, which supports Democratic Senate candidates, has spent more than \$22 million on Senate races, and the Chamber of Commerce has spent up to \$17 million on House and Senate races' (*New York Times*, 27 July).

Dirty Tricks

With the 100th anniversary of the day the First World War began, it is sobering to look back at the way that conflict was so badly reported. The catalogue of journalistic misdeeds is a matter of record: the willingness to publish propaganda as fact, the apparently tame acceptance of censorship and the failure to hold power to account. 'But a sweeping condemnation of the press coverage is unjust because journalists, as ever, were prevented from informing the public by three powerful forces - the government, the military and their own proprietors. It is undeniable that newspapers began by

demonising the German enemy. They published fabricated stories of German barbarism, which were accepted as fact' (*Guardian*, 27 July). It has taken 100 years for British newspapers to come clean about their misreporting so how much of that still goes on today?

Meat Grinder

We have all seen politicians and religious leaders commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Great War of 1914-18. What we haven't seen is any of them apologising for the society that produced such a bloodbath. 'More than nine million troops were killed, and, depending on how you count them, as many as 10 million civilians. In Turkey, Russia, the Balkans and elsewhere, unprecedented millions of people became homeless refugees. Some 21 million soldiers were wounded. In Britain, 41,000 men had one or more limbs amputated; in France, so

many had mangled faces that they formed a National Union of Disfigured Men' (*Guardian*, 28 July). This is what capitalism and its drive for markets leads to - disfigurement and death.

Les Miserables

In its unrelenting search for ways to cut welfare spending the NHS is an easy target as reports of poor mental health care show. Family doctors have warned of the deteriorating state of mental healthcare in England, after a survey revealed that one in five had seen a patient come to harm because they could not get specialist help. 'GPs reported that some patients had committed suicide or been sectioned because of a lack of available community mental health services. More than eight in 10 GPs now believe that their local mental health teams cannot cope with caseloads, and nearly half said that the situation in their area had got even worse in the past 12 months' (*Independent*, 31 July).



FREE LUNCH

